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MERRY-GO-ROUND

OTHER WORKS

by

GEORGES LEWYS

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Yamhill, a novel

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Lewis, Gladys Adelina

MERRY-GO-ROUND

(From the Austrian.....)

BY

GEORGES LEWYS, pseud.

Unexpunged and Complete Edition

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To my friend, Erich von Stroheim,
who was the inspiration of this work.....

"Das Leben ist ein Ringelspiel, da wird oft manchem bang,
Dem einen ist zu kurz die Tour, dem anderen zu lang."

("Life is a merry-go-round—of joys, of tears, of song,
To one the trip is oft too short, another one too long.")

PREFATORY NOTE

Readers of MERRY-GO-ROUND should bear in mind that the story is of a continental (European) flavour and portrays the life and manners of the city of Vienna prior to and since the war. . . . It is not necessary to blush for the truth nor to apologise for realism; the book must be accepted for what it is worth: not the triumph or failure of virtue or vice, but the frank weighing of values in the scale of social depravity and regeneration. . . . Caution is merely made against any attempt to approach incidents in the story from a too-sensitive (American) viewpoint. . . .

The Author wishes to acknowledge thanks to Mr. Erich von Stroheim for invaluable suggestions at all times; to Captain Albert Conti for technical help in describing the retreat at Rawaruska, etc.; and to Count Mario Caracciolo for the Venetian scenes and Italian conditions of internment during the war. . . .

Attention is called to the fact that the Radetzky statue, which is the outstanding feature to the Viennese of their late martial spirit, was removed from the Platz Am Hof in 1912 to a position before the *K. u. K. Artillerie Arsenal* off the Wiedener Gürtel in the 10th District of Vienna—"Favoriten." . . . Not wishing to dissociate the old memorial from the life in the inner city, where it was so long renowned and recognized, liberty was taken to leave it on the Am Hof after 1912, through war and succeeding peace. . . .

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Vienna . . . old . . . gray . . . historical. . . .
The town of joy . . . of gladness . . . and of mirth. . . .
of sordid sorrow . . . and of grief . . .
of song . . . of wine . . . of heart affairs . . . .
of sentimental tears . . . and heedless prankish laughter . . . .
of mediaeval pomp . . . and martial spirit. . . .
. . . the town of dukes . . . of princes . . . and of counts . . . and beggars . . . .
of women sweet and pure . . . and harlots. . . .
. . . . . .
Vienna with a code of morals all its own . . . .
bravely idling away the hours . . . .
to the strains of Strauss and Lehar . . . .
not knowing of tomorrow . . . . .

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I

FRANCISCUS ERASMUS OTTO ADALBERT VON DER HOHENEGG

In the year 1280 a castle was lodged on the upper reaches of the Danube River. It was at Pöchlarn, above Vienna, in the Ost-Mark, which was the original name of Austria, that later, by the addition of Hungary, Bohemia, Tyrol and other vassal states, became the great empire of Austria-Hungary. . . .

This castle was the stronghold of a robber-knight.

He would pillage, storm and burn the countryside, being a man of about fifty years who had spent his life in wars. When the wars ended over that period the Count von der Hohenegg, who was this robber, made a fortress out of his chateau, posting men-at-arms at the loop-holes, watching the highroad for travelers and falling upon these. . . . He murdered as many as he robbed. And those whom he robbed were glad to fly for their lives before the insolent band of highwaymen, outlaws by profession, outragers of human decency and despoilers of women!

Count von der Hohenegg had a liking for beautiful women and for strong ale. He robbed the abbeys and took the casks of wine. He stopped the trains and demanded toll from wayfarers who journeyed down the shore of the Danube from the provinces into Vienna, then, as now, the most important commercial city of central Europe. . . . The Danube was ordinarily placid, but before his castle raged into a whirlpool of green water! This was just the place for a robber-baron, one of the type with which Germany and Austria were infested during the lawless period. . . .

Count von der Hohenegg was a man of gigantic stature. His hair upstood like a ruff on his head, coal-black, but white at the roots, like his beard, which was also profuse. His cheeks were flaming red—in patches purple when his passions were roused and the conquest of his men brought booty and an occasional high bishop into his clutches, when he tortured him, bringing down the whole condemnation of the church on his head, but in no way interfering with his toll or his licentious disposition. He then took the bishop and defrocked him, made him perform antics, such as running about on all fours as his retainers stuck him in the hinder portion of his anatomy with spears, or walled him up alive in a cask or hanged him to the nearest tree! . . .

Count von der Hohenegg was a sworn enemy of the church. The peasants, who cultivated their crops on the table-lands of the Danube, rejoiced at this. They were much oppressed by the bishops and the clergy. They had to pay high rents for their lands which were held by the abbots, and besides this the clergy forbade any learning among the lower classes, preferring to keep the people in ignorance and superstition. Otherwise they might have risen against the church. So they filled the peasants with stories of witchcraft and ghost lore and exacted heavy penances for the slightest fault or fall from grace. . . . Even the emperor was excommunicated for daring to question the power of the pope in Rome. So when the feudal barons caught a churchman and defrocked him, the peasants crossed themselves with the right hand, thanking God, and with the other shook their curses at the robber-baron who despoiled their crops.

In the winter when the Danube carried floating ice, they told about the exploits of the robber-barons in spring. They knew the name of Franciscus Erasmus Otto Adalbert, who was the Count von der Hohenegg, and the best fortified outlaw in the land. His castle

had high turrets that were walled in by great trees covered with snow, and when the snow melted and the spring came it was equally invisible because it was made of black stone as dismal as the forest that grew up about it. . . .

In this forest some of the most terrible crimes were committed. The highroad skirted the forest. A caravan of horses and a stage-coach could proceed down this highway and be seen by the watchers in the castle. But the stronghold was never visible below. Thus, when such a cavalcade, starting from Passau with the first sign of open weather, followed the beautiful blue Danube to the heights at Pöchlarn and then dropped into the forest, the watchers in the castle were roused by the sound of hoofs. They sprang to the loop-holes. They saw a body of horsemen, eight in number, galloping at a good pace—which would take them in the shortest time through this dismal region — toward Vienna, and surrounding a stage-coach in which rode two passengers, a woman and a man. . . .

Without waiting for further preparation, the watchers sprang below. They grasped battle-axes and swords and swung open the castle's gates!

Franciscus, himself an antelope, led the descent over boulders and crags into the heart of the woods before the approaching riders. His cheeks were flaming, the great scar girdling his cheek from the ear to the nose, won through a war in the Crusades, rose like a welt from a flail . . . his hair stood upright from his brow . . . he carried his sword, unsheathed, in his hand for this first sally after the winter. . . . His feet were so well shod no living thing could have heard him step. And the men-at-arms, as silent and ruthless as he, surrounded the stage-coach and its armed guards as they travelled along the highway. . . .

A cry pealed out upon the river front! The stage came to a halt. And now the guards, ridden far in

front, turned and wheeled, to see themselves engaged on every hand! Armed outlaws sprang from behind the trees, rose from the bushes, struck them—the babel resounded through the forest depths! The horsemen were cut down, their mounts run through!

Franciscus von der Hohenegg, himself engaged with the leading horseman, after mastering him threw himself upon the stage-coach which the driver was whipping up, preparatory to making a dash down the road with his luckless passengers. . . .

But the bandit chief prevented this. He slashed the nearest horse down by hamstringing its legs, and the other three, heading for the river, turned the stage-coach so far about that it toppled over on its side, crashing to the ground, and was dragged, scraping and bumping, with its passengers for a distance of sixty feet! Here it was dashed against the trees . . . the axles broken, the horses flew into the distance, dislodged from the shafts! Everywhere was horror and confusion! . . .

Underneath the coach, the driver and two occupants were unable to stir. The driver was dead. His skull had been opened by a blow from the shafts as the carriage turned over.

The woman lay, breathing faintly. Her companion, semi-conscious, clasped her about the waist as if he wanted to protect her even in his helplessness from the furious bandit chieftain. . . . Her veil still covered her face and kept her identity secret and a heavy cloak was hung about her in such a way that she was almost totally out of sight. . . . But Franciscus found her all the same, lifting the coach with all his strength—which was strength enough to fell an ox!—and causing it to fall to one side, thereby dislodging the driver, who rolled over, exposing his head broken open and the mass of his face pressed into a jelly. . . . It was

a terrible sight! The victims hid their eyes but were too frightened to let out a murmur.

Franciscus pounced upon the woman and tore her from her protector's side! He even lifted his sword and struck off the hand of the man and then ran him through in so cruel a manner as to curdle the blood of his own retainers, who were rifling the coach and used to sights of rape and carnage. He caught the woman up and started to mount with her through a hidden track that led, by skirting to the right and raising forty or fifty paces, into the rear of the Castle Hohenegg. . . . He alone knew of this path—with his retainers. A stranger could never have found it.

Between the trunks of enormous beech-trees and maples and pines, that brushed his face with their resinous branches, the robber-baron flew with the dazed woman, who now recovered herself and started to beat him with her fists, letting out short, miserable cries of fright. . . .

All the way to the castle she fought him. Her veil was pulled from her face, disclosing a milk-white, refined, beautiful countenance that belonged to a woman of quality . . . a noblewoman, of the finest classes . . . in spite of which and the power with which she beat him, he deliberately bent back her head until it lay in the crotch of his elbow, gave her a searching look and pressed his mouth to hers, kissing her cruelly! . . .

The whirlpool sang in the Danube . . . torches fluttered through the eerie night . . . from the eastern spur of the Alps Mountains came an odour of violets. . . .

He lifted her, half insensible, and took her into his castle!

II

FRANZL

In modern Vienna is a café, among scores, located on the principal thoroughfare, the Ringstrasse[1], girdling the city proper, dividing the old Vienna of the time of the Crusades and of the Emperer Otho and the Saracens, from the new portion embracing practically twenty-one districts.

This Ringstrasse was created out of the fortifications which ran in circular fashion completely around the ancient city.

Vienna is a city of life and gaiety. The Ringstrasse Café is only one of the sources of her inspiration by night.

In the Ringstrasse Café one evening in April of the year 1914 sat six people at a special table. They were all in civilian dress, still the close-clipped and careful tonsorial arrangement of the heads of the three male guests proved beyond the question to a knowing observer that they were Austrian officers, men in the service of the Emperor Franz-Josef, either doing duty at his court or in his armies in time of peace—like now. . . .

Franzl is the first of these. He is very tall, slim, corseted, correct in masculine dress, even dandified. His face has regular features of Teutonic origin. His shoulders are powerful and square. His moustache is pomaded and has a slight upward tilt at the ends as if kept in binding for hours at a time in preparation for his midnight carousals and feminine conquests.

Rudi, the second, parts his hair in the middle—what there is of it. He also wears the cavalry cut. His

[1]Ring Street.

ears are very protrusive, sticking out from his head, but not in an ugly manner. Rudi is silly and has a foolish expression as if he were always saying to himself: "This is a great life. It was made for fools like me. It doesn't do to be too clever and realise anything!" . . . And he didn't realise anything, either. For instance, he believed in the upper classes and never realised there might be lower ones and that these might some day throw over the old regime. He realised there might be war and he would have to go and put his full-dress uniform in the moth-closet, but his mind never travelled to the actual consequences of a declaration, battle, death, immortality perhaps! . . . He never thought at all, except of ladies, horses, cards and wine, and then only in the most drivelling way. The fact is, Rudi was a typical cavalry officer, which meant in Austria serving the emperor with the seat of the trousers but seldom with the brains of a student or in a commercial way. He belonged to the regiment of the Uhlans, one of the three kinds of Austrian cavalry. . . .

His closest friend was Nicki von Uebermut, sitting next to him with a lady in between. It was *his* lady, but she was now talking to Franzl. She always talked to Franzl. This was very annoying to Rudi, who, nevertheless, was a perfectly good friend to Franzl and wished him to have as many ladies as he could comfortably entertain at all hours, which is the true test of friendship.

Nicki came from Hungary—the Petch district. Of the three officers he alone, in his own eyes, understood the mounts they rode at parade. The Petch is a great horse-breeding district in Hungary and all the most barbarous, untamed horses come from here, as well as men of the same nature. Nicki, therefore, was a wonderful horseman, he had a wild and untutored disposition and he had a great deal of money. Of the last he was very careless. A man who has fabulously large

estates and belongs to the Uebermut family—Nicklaz Piszta der Uebermut—can afford this attitude . . . who else can?

Nicki was now wrinkling his brows, making them correspond to the very natural wave of his hair, close to kinky, in trying to remember the name of a girl he met once who sang in a cabaret and had olive skin and light blond hair.

Rudi named over every girl of his acquaintance. Nicki discarded them all with a wave of his hand.

"This lady, she drank wine mixed with lemonade and always said it reminded her of a drink in Russia," he said.

"Elvira," said Franzl at once, not taking his eyes off the girl he was listening to, Mitzerl.

"No, no," said Rudi disgustedly.

"*She* danced in a cabaret."

"When?"

"When she first came here."

"How long ago?"

"Seven... eight... ten years," said Franzl.

"Where'd she come from?"

"Russia. The Yamskaya Sloboda."

"You don't say!" exclaimed Nicki, lifting his eyebrows. "This is news to me. You say Elvira came from—the Yamkas?"

"Sure, she was a—— Well, you know the kind of a life the ladies lead there. . . ."

"Better not say it," warned Rudi, eyeing the girls, Mitzerl and Fanny and Gretel. "We are not alone."

"Oh, that's all right," said Gretel, lighting a Turkish cigarette. "She came from a five-rouble house, but —what of it?"

Nicki looked at Franzl.

"Let's have some—wine," he said, suppressing a smile, "with lemonade."

So the wine was ordered, and Mitzerl commenced to talk to Franzl again in her lively manner.

She was a little milliner from the Kärntnerstrasse. She wore a high collar in the back of her dress, which was low in front, long black gloves, a flat hat that sat up high on her head behind. Her features were very pretty, and Rudi had met her by special appointment after having seen her walking on the Kärntnerstrasse with Fanny one sunny afternoon. He was seated at the time in the Café Scheidel all by himself, looking out of the window at the opera house, and the vision of her face was so strong that he presented himself by boldly looking into her eyes from the window, going outside and following her immediately. . . .

This forwardness, far from shocking her, had the opposite effect. Rudi was in uniform. As a dashing young captain with shining buttons, two medals on his chest and a long thin cigarette-holder between his highly-glossed finger-nails, he was irresistible. Consequently she met him, they became attracted to each other and frequently went out.

Fanny was rather stout and had blond hair. She liked to wear big ruches and, underneath, vests in her suits like a man. She had also a feather in her hat and was a milliner. She said very little because she lisped and always preferred to have Mitzerl do the talking, which she did.

She was still engaged with Franzl until Gretel leaned over and grasped him by the arm.

"My dear sweetheart," she said in a low voice, "you are making yourself conspicuous talking to Mitzie all the time. You two have so much to talk about. Better make an engagement and go out special." . . .

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Mitzie. "We haven't seen each other in some time. Let us alone."

"You have Rudi to talk to."

"You talk to him," said Mitzie flippantly.

Rudi had nothing to talk about. Thinking very seldom, he only waited until somebody had something to say to him and then he responded with a burst of laughter, or nothing.

Now the waiter came over and supplied them all with fresh glasses. The music was going on, the café was filled with people. They ate a little something—caviar sandwiches and *Wiener Schnitten.* The time was rapidly approaching midnight and then going on. . . .

Franzl leaned his elbows on the table, striving to talk to all the girls at once. In this he partly succeeded because he was the handsomest of the three young men, gifted with fine personal grace, rows of even white teeth and a natural sunny disposition. He had always more conversation offered him than he could well digest. The two girls would each have been glad to exchange him for their own sweethearts, but in this act they were forestalled by Gretel, who had been, up to the time she met Franzl, the toast of the town. She was an actress, formerly of the comic opera, who now contented herself with an easy life. By leading an existence only at night and sleeping most of the day, she managed to look very young although she was over thirty.

Franzl patted her hand, kept his eyes on Mitzerl and touched Fanny's knee under the table with his own. The wine was mounting to his head. He could feel himself getting very dizzy and animated, but it was a pleasurable sensation and he allowed it to increase. He had left off drinking any lemonade and the champagne was poured out now for the eighth time, always into his glass and Nicki's, but only every other time into the balance of the six.

"Tell me, do I look drunk?" he said to Mitzerl. "If I do it is because I look at you and not from the wine in my glass."

"Of course it's not the wine in your glass, silly," she retorted; "it's what's in your head!"

"Very true, but what do you know what's in my head?"

"Isn't it what's in mine?"

"Is it?"

This senseless conversation could only originate from the environment. It springs into the mind with a snap every time the mouth is opened when the senses are so dull they can only fall back on repetition and maudlin sentiment, or an excursion into the risque.

Nicki was silent, but his eyes glistened. Rudi was breaking matches from the match-container into little pieces for no purpose whatever.

So the conversation went on.

"If you know what's in my head, supposing we put our heads together?"

"What for?" asked Mitzerl.

"I'll tell you," said Franzl elaborately. "I've got a great idea. Tomorrow is Green Thursday, no? Well, there will be a ceremony at the Burg[1]——"

Nicki leaned close to him.

"Shut up," he said politely.

"Wait, don't disturb me," Franzl waved a hand at him, "you don't know what I want to say. Tomorrow is Green Thursday, and the *Fusswashung*[2] takes place at the palace. The emperor washes old men's feet. It's a pious act. Now, what is to prevent that we go somewhere, eh, Nicki, eh, Rudi, and we perform the same act, only it's not quite so pious?" . . . He winked an eye.

"What do you mean?" said Nicki.

"We treat ourselves to the grace of God and the girls are the penitents."

---

[1]emperor's palace.

[2]footwashing, a ceremony performed on Green or Holy Thursday. the day preceding Good Friday.

"You mean, we wash their feet?"

"What's to prevent?"

The girls, Fanny and Mitzerl, commenced to giggle.

"Now come, girls," said Franzl, "don't giggle. It's a pious act and must be done with the proper spirit."

"Proper spirit, by all means!" roared Nicki; "don't you see the joke: we are full of spirit, are we not, Rudi? . . ."

Rudi burst out laughing.

"Come, be quiet," said Gretel. "Let us consider the footwashing. What do you say to a champagne bath?"

"All the way in?"

"Sure."

"Who'll do it?"

"Not I!" said Mitzerl.

"Not I!" said Fanny.

"You'll do it, Gretel," said Franzl. "I'll order the champagne."

"Of course, I'll do it, but not here. I object to a bath in public. Now, what do you say to tomorrow night, at Elvira's?"

"Elvira's! the very thing! Shall we meet at Elvira's? Well, now, Rudi, you have a good friend in Madame Elvira, you tell her to invite the war minister to see Gretel take a bath. . . ."

Rudi burst out laughing.

"Come, what time is it? It is after half past two. The evening has been slow. Don't laugh. We are half drunk. Call the waiter and get me some champagne. I am dry as dust. . . ."

What Franzl meant by the evening being slow amounted to this: he was accustomed to much gaiety. He was something of a cad. He was perfectly willing to have a good time with either of these girls—if the other two and their escorts had not been present. He could not kiss Mitzerl before Gretel. He could not toy with Fanny in front of Nicki. Nicki was a fiery officer.

. . . If he—Franzl—were alone, he would have pranced up to the home of any one of the three girls, or a score more he knew in Vienna, as is the way with young men sowing their wild oats, and have gotten a souvenir when the evening was over from any one of the ladies of his acquaintance. Only his brother officers would never have seen these souvenirs. They belonged in a private drawer he had at home. It was crammed with just such presents: garters from some, long, beautiful stockings from others, used by Franzl as book-markers, fans, purses with little gold curls of hair tucked inside, gloves of blue, pink and white, stained with the remains of illicit feasts . . .

Or is it illicit, if both parties consent to be bored or stimulated by each other's company?

Franzl was getting very badly bored. Drunk as he was, he longed for action: a kiss from somebody . . . and was sorely tempted to lean across the table and take a try at Mitzerl's red and pouting lips. But this is not done in Vienna cafés. However debauched young men may be, they never get beyond pressing their lady's foot gently with their own under the table, or clasping hands beneath the apron of the board that holds their mutual glasses of wine. . . . He could have engaged a private dining-room, but this is seldom done except for a tête-à-tête, and he had always his companions to consider.

Therefore, as he could not kiss anyone, he made up his mind this was one of the last parties he cared to engage in any more where his friends were present and in a public restaurant . . . and he managed to put a word into Mitzerl's ear on the sly about a private engagement which caused her to giggle outright.

The word was: "Some day you will have to give me a souvenir."

The first time he saw Gretel he said the same thing to her, and he had taken enough of her clothing from time to time to furnish up a wardrobe in his own house!

Now she, catching the word from Mitzerl's ear and being accustomed to the sound of it, which always concluded a party with her lover, said calmly and with that diplomatic *finesse* which had kept her the toast of Vienna for ten years among innumerable admirers whom she held to her when their affections strayed,—as Franzl's did at this moment,—and maybe she wished to give Mitzie a little lesson at the same time on the possession which is nine-tenths of the law among love-affairs as it is in business:

"If you are looking for something to place your cigars in on your desk, for instance, or your dressing-table, here it is, my dear sweetheart."

Gretel took off her shoe.

"Take this from me... and if your friends want to drink champagne out of it, that would also be useful."

She handed him her little gold slipper, which he placed upon the table before him with envious looks from Rudi and Nicki; and he clasped her hand doubly tight in his own, as if to assure her she always understood and she was his best sweetheart after all. . . .

Then he tried to stand on the table and toppled off, gave Nicki a blow with his fist as if he were trying to feint him, and stumbled away to advise with the *Oberkellner*[1] about a suitable good-night cup.

It was three A. M.

When he returned the girls had fallen into one another's arms. The café was empty. Nicki had lit a big black cigar....

"Come, let us go home. I have a clear head, and tomorrow is the *Fusswashung*."

They all rose—tipsily.

---

[1]head waiter.

"*Fusswashung?* It's the bathing party!" cried Nicki. "Rudi is going to arrange it."

"You will not forget, Rudi?" said Franzl.

Rudi burst out laughing. . . .

III

MORNING FOLLOWING NIGHT

Franzl took his *Fiaker*[1], one that was unnumbered, to see his lady home; then he drove silently about the city — as his own address was on the other side — and passed the Capuchin Church, which, in company with Stephansthurm[2] and the Votive Church, was chiming the morning hour of four. The "Iron Man" on the top of the steeple of the new city hall was just becoming visible in the early light of dawn, and he passed the Volksgarten[3], absolutely deserted. The street lamps burned brightly, however.

If it had been the afternoon instead of the morning hour of four, when all fashionable Vienna is on wheels, he would have passed Radetzky and saluted the old bronze warrior on his horse before the Am Hof[4]. Then he would have gone out the Praterstrasse into the great playground of Vienna, which is thousands of acres converted into drives and pleasure parks, called the Prater. . . . Friends would have recognized him on the *corso* and he might have bowed to right and left, seeing the fashionable livery of this or that high personage of the Austrian court.

Principally Franzl would have bowed to a canary-coloured livery that sped along like the wind on the Hauptallee or main course every afternoon. It belonged to the Princess Metternich. She was to Vienna what Empress Eugènie was to the French in her declining years—an historic figure, a fixture, as she was reaching her eightieth year and had driven thus, to and

---

[1]hired carriage.
[2]the tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna's greatest landmark.
[3]people's park, across from the palace.
[4]Platz Am Hof, the largest street square in Vienna proper.

fro, for more than half a century, and all this time, having a fixed position at court, leading a lively life and having admirers and love affairs by the score. . . .

But Franzl, had it been the afternoon, would not have been in a *Fiaker,* a hired carriage, without number and identification, because the young man had his own livery, splendid horses and a carriage in which he rode in full uniform, fully identified, curling his waxed moustache. At this time he would be addressed as "Your Excellency," and his title would be Franz Maxmillian, Count von Hohenegg, descended from thirty-one generations of von der Hoheneggs, and now a captain of the Imperial and Royal Dragoons and His Majesty, the Emperor Franz-Josef's Wing-Adjutant and Chamberlain!

These honours sat lightly upon the young man's shoulders because he was born to them. He inherited them with his house and the upkeep for the house and the servants. He had fourteen servants and all of thirty-two rooms, and was quite alone in the world because his parents had deserted him and gone into the other world when he was just sixteen, one quickly after the other. . . .

The Palais Hohenegg stood on Auerspergstrasse. Franzl, half-stupefied and wholly permitted to be so, since he had no tie in the world to reprove him except one, and that did not matter! came to the door of his house, No. 10, along with the morning, and dismounted and dismissed his cabby unsteadily. He rang for his *portier* and was let in. He walked through the courtyard and up the marble steps to the mosaic floor, between the plate-glass doors into a fabulously ornate interior of a house! Indeed, it looked like a royal abode because the halls were on a massive scale, the furniture was plush-covered and extremely fine, and statues and ornaments were standing about on every shelf.

So he mounted the grand staircase of white Carrara

marble, flanked on each side by crenellations and decorations, and crests and coats-of-arms wherever his eyes turned—only now he had all he could do to look straight ahead—and then came to his own room, the first of a half dozen rooms allocated to himself,—studies, bedroom, dressing-rooms and bath. . . .

This whole way he was arguing with himself for having left, at the Café Ringstrasse, Gretel's little gold slipper on the table. Hunt as he would all his pockets through, there was no sign of a souvenir.

"Distinctly, I remember this," he said to himself. "I put that little slipper in my pocket." And he made another search—lo and behold! it was in his coat-pocket, and he had looked for it there twenty times.

In the bedroom a sleek dog, lying on the hearth-rug, sprang up as he entered.

"Down, Spitzbub[1]!"

The dog frisked about him, and bent himself down on his front paws and yawned.

Franzl stepped out of his overcoat, shirt, pants and underclothes, throwing the garments in all directions, until he stood in his skin. Then he put on his fine silk night-shirt that lay on the bed.

If he had only four hours to sleep—as the ceremony of the footwashing commenced at ten o'clock and it took him two hours to dress in the morning, (he undressed in as many minutes at night,)—he was entitled to make as much of the four hours as he could. Before leaping into the sheets, however, he took the slipper of Gretel and put it on his dresser, patting it affectionately. He even deposited a kiss on the inside of the slipper, swaying back and forth, and then—dropped it! . . . What happened further he never knew.

For he slept from that moment, oblivious, forgetting everything, as if he hadn't slipped on the Kerman-

[1]rascal, rogue.

shah rug and brought up headlong trying to get to his bed! . . .

The sleep of a man who has been drinking is always heavy, his mouth is dry, his brow is moist. The valet who wakes him in the morning is bound to have a hard time of it, and this often fell to the lot of the Count von Hohenegg's man, Nepomuck Navratil.

The *Bursche*[1] was the single house servant in the uniform of the army, his master's valet. But there was also a civilian valet, an Englishman who spoke German very incorrectly, but knew how to be a valet better than any Teuton in the world. However, Nepomuck took the stand of a superior to Martin, the civilian valet, because the uniform comes first in Austria, and, though without education, the man who wears it is the favourite of the house and can kick and cuff as much as he likes.

When Franzl gave his man, Nepomuck, from the provinces, a blow, and then followed this up with a piece of money in order to save his feelings, Nepomuck gave the civilian, Martin, a blow, but he did not give him any money, so the effect was simply that of arrogance, and did not have anything to do with the feelings. Still he was too superior, and if it had not been for his master's affection many times he would have gone too far.

The *portier* downstairs was just opening the house doors, in full uniform for the holiday, when the first sign of life—the lamp-extinguisher—passed down the street. This man put out the street-lamps by turning them individually with an instrument he carried. And after him came the waterman and the assistant waterman, who carried the hose at the back of the cart and sprinkled the street by throwing the water to both sides as well as he could.

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[1] a soldier's servant.

This was a very old-fashioned method, but it belonged to the life of Vienna as much as the Radetzky statue or the Danube maids in the fountain before the Belvedere[1], or the *Stock im Eisen.*[2] . . .

One of the maids of the Palais Hohenegg was putting her head out of an upper window to shake out the feather-duster she carried, when the watermen passed . . . . she waved it at them. At once the assistant craned his neck to get a view of her and turned the water from the hose upon himself! Then she laughed heartily and closed the window.

The next to arrive was a wine delivery wagon—the square blue wagon on high wheels of Franz Stibitz. On the sides were inscribed the words: *"Zum Grünen Kamel,"* meaning the sign of the "Green Camel." Stibitz was the imperial and royal court purveyor and supplied all the wines and liquors to Franzl. . . . After him came the butcher's apprentice—prompt on the dot of seven, carrying the meat supply of the household, beef and loins of pork. . . .

"Go on, you dirty rascal!" said the *portier* good-naturedly, sticking him in the stomach with his staff: "such a disgrace, *nun,* with what an apron you come here." He dusted himself off with the back of his hand. . . . "Go inside," he remarked to Stibitz's delivery man who carried gold-sealed bottles in two baskets. . . .

The butcher's apprentice, as fat as he was high, commenced to wiggle his fingers from his nose,

"Aaaaah," said he, making the long sound.

"Pfui," said the *portier.*

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[1]palace given to Prince Eugène, famous Austrian general of early eighteenth century. Later the residence of murdered archduke, Franz Ferdinand.

[2]a tree-stump in the Graben, one of the principal business streets of Vienna. This stump is preserved as a souvenir from 1575 and once marked the extremity of the Wiener Wald. It is covered by nails driven in by journeymen-apprentices.

"Tassel hat!" referring to the *portier's* tasseled hat.

"Schwein!"

The apprentice continued to dance about with his fat legs. Then came the *Schusterbub*[1], carrying a pair of the Count von Hohenegg's boots, highly glossed, over his shoulder. . . .

"What do you want?"

"His excellency's riding boots," he retorted, and commenced also to tease the *portier.*

"Enough! go inside! get after your business and see that you get through." . . .

But before going, the little *Schusterbub,* who had bare legs with slippers on the feet, stuck his face into the butcher's basket and carried himself indoors, holding his nose smartly as if he smelled nauseating odours.

The *portier* had hardly got rid of him and the apprentice before a district messenger boy stood in front of No. 10 with a long, square box in his hand, the name "Fossati" written in black letters on the cover.

This was an old man with a gray beard—the typical messenger and only kind of "boy" that can qualify for the job in Vienna. He handed the *portier* the box, who rang for a servant; the count's man, Martin, answered the call and took the box from "Fossati."

"Fossati" was the fashionable florist and the box of flowers was inscribed "K. u. K. Hoflieferant," meaning the usual high-sounding formula of the shop-keepers—"Imperial and Royal Court Purveyor." He supplied the court and all the nobility, officers and their ladies with flowers. Actresses, cabaret dancers came also under the head.

Although more than a yard in length, the end of the box was cut off, exposing the stems of roses for another foot, covered with green glazed oil paper. . . . Mar-

[1]cobbler's boy.

tin took the box upstairs. Nepomuck took it into the count's room.

It was seven-thirty o'clock and the clothes lay all over the floor. The dog was sleeping. The count was sleeping. The shades were down.

Nepomuck put the box of flowers on the dresser, looking for the name of the sender on the outside without result. . . . He received a little shock when he saw the ebony crucifix, which usually stood there, lying on the floor with a woman's gold slipper heel on the image of Christ! It was Gretel's shoe, which, having fallen from Franzl's hand the hours previous, carried down the sanctified crucifix with it, settling on top.

Nepomuck picked it up and straightened the room; he looked at himself in the mirror above the mantel and stroked his scraggy moustache. There was a mirror directly opposite, fastened on the bed behind the count's head. It had a sliding arrangement that moved upward . . . all young fashionable men had these for a purpose. . . . Nepomuck saw himself reflected two, three, no—five or six times as the mirrors faced and renewed the image a dozen times or endlessly. . . . When his survey was over, he stooped, removed the clothes from the floor and took the pants, overcoat and boots, *und so weiter* . . . into the dressing-room; the balance went into the laundry. . . . Then he went further, perceiving the hour of day, and in the bathroom was Martin, the civilian valet, starting preparations for the bath. . . .

Martin faced the *Bursche* with one look,—it meant "Well, have you waked up the master?"

Nepomuck shrugged one shoulder,

"When one marches around the whole night he sleeps well in the morning, no? Come, let's put some lavender salts into his excellency's bath this day." He dipped his hands into a crystal bottle, scooping out large handfulls and dropping them into the tub. . . .

Behind his back the *Laibdiener*[1] took a small bottle of perfume and moistened his handkerchief surreptitiously with a few drops; but Nepomuck caught him at this and gave him a cuff and a shove!

"So, you are taking perfume again! Come, I'll show you a little of that!" and he deliberately, taking his time, selected the largest, most extravagant looking bottle on the dressing-table where it stood among a couple of dozen, and withdrew the long crystal stopper. . . . He wiped this slowly across his moustache, first on the right side, then on the left. . . .

"If you want to see further, look on!" . . . Out came his pocket handkerchief from his pocket, he poured on the scent from the bottle until it ran over onto the floor, forming a pool. Setting the bottle down, he squeezed the handkerchief as if he were wringing it out—and the pool became a little lake. . . .

"Now," he said insolently, "just go and wipe that up so his excellency's feet don't get wet . . . it might give him a chill, he has been out all night."

No man is a hero to his valet, especially when he is not concerned with a uniform. But the valet Martin was stupefied.

"That 's acting like a cur," he said,—"it 's a low-down thing to do."

"Is it?"

Nepomuck then showed him the seat of his trousers—"Just watch here!" He lifted the tail of his coat and put a delicate dose of the high-priced perfume directly on the spot where he usually sat down.

"That's very nice now! What an idiot," cried the *Laibdiener,* "to be sure. . . . only a man from the cow-stables would think of a thing like that."

"Does it look that way to you?" responded Nepomuck, coolly corking up the bottle. . . . "Well, come,

[1]body servant.

box my ears for it and I'll wipe up the floor with you—underneath the washbowl now!" . . . He straightened his coat and shook his chin out of his collar.

The other turned the water into the tub, ignoring him; he was paid to hold his tongue, not to lose his temper.

Nepomuck went out of the room.

When Franzl was awakened by the *Bursche* a moment later, he at first thought the hand touching his shoulder so gently belonged to somebody else. He was, in fact, dreaming of a lady. But presently the valet shook harder, Franzl opened his eyes, perceived the face of Nepomuck looking directly into his own, and he reached out his hand and levelled a pillow at him! The pillow fell short. Nepomuck was a good hand to duck, but he now immediately removed the clock, water-bottle and glass—all loose and tempting objects in the proximity—and mentioned cordially—"*Herr Graf,* time to get up."

"Show me the clock," grumbled the *Herr Graf.*

Nepomuck did so and Franzl moved the hands back so that he could turn over and sleep for an additional ten minutes. . . .

Hardly had his head touched the pillow, however, and his thoughts resumed toward the dream state, than Nepomuck lifted his riding boots, allowing them to fall to the floor with a heavy jar! Instantly his eyes flew open—

"*Rindsvieh! du Esel . . . Kamel!*"[1]

All this abuse which he poured out caused him to become wider awake, which was exactly the effect desired. . . .

"What time is it?"

"*Herr Graf,* eight o'clock . . . and your excellency must be at the *Fusswashung* . . . I beg your pardon. . . ."

[1]"Ox! you donkey... camel!"

Franzl grumbled again, ruffling up his own hair. . . . "All right. . . ." he stepped gingerly to the floor and sat down on the edge of his bed. With this motion, Spitzbub, his retriever on the hearth-rug, commenced to rise, stretching himself as Franzl did so, bending up and down, opening his mouth in a wide yawn.

The *Bursche* brought the flowers from "Fossati" and laid them on the silk coverlet. . . .

"What's that?" Franzl undid the string, smiled with the effort and blinked at the American Beauty roses uncovered within. . . . Here was a card as well, small, dainty, square and perfumed . . . he placed it to his nose, read the message, winking at it slowly—

"Bonjour, mon ami . . . je t'envoie mes baisers."

He wrinkled his nose in sarcasm and repeated the name at the end of the missive: "Claire . . . Claire . . . . " Spitzbub came sniffing up and he shoved the roses to one side. "Hello, old fellow," began the master to the dog affectionately, "here comes the usual offering . . . that's the sixth or the seventh batch of kisses she sends me . . . that Claire—she's a hot one. . . . . You know what she is?" He patted the back of the dog and whispered something into his ear—"That's what she is—*nicht wahr?*"

Sleepily he found his way into the dressing-room; Nepomuck lay on one knee, polishing his boots; Martin waited with his hot water drawn in the bathroom.

All these apartments were decorated in a choice manner. Cabinets ranged around the walls, built in everywhere with racks and racks of uniforms—the clothing of an officer of the cavalry. . . . Hats were here, belonging to regiments and occasions, swords, saber-tassels, silk shirts, silk under-drawers, military cape-coats. . . . Franzl was never undecided what he wanted to wear. The court calendar attended to this detail.

He had his breakfast served in the bathtub, which

had a back and head-piece against which he could rest himself. A half-hour was consumed in breakfasting and then he was rubbed down by his *Laibdiener,* his silk underwear was brought to him, he was shaved, pedicured, manicured, atomized with *Parfum des Milles Fleurs,* his military hair-cut brushed to a nicety until every hair was in its best spot, and his coat collar buttoned up, the medals on his breast. . . . Franz Maximillian, Count von Hohenegg, was ready to attend his emperor at the court. His sword was hooked onto his side, the moustache binding taken off. Franzl donned his short cape and helmet. . . .

He was about to go out of the door when the telephone bell rang.

Nepomuck answered this and called him.

"Who is it?"

"The Countess von Steinbrueck, your excellency."

Franzl made a grimace, threw aside the cigarette from his mouth and answered, annoyed. . . .

IV

GISELLA

Countess Gisella von Steinbrueck had one passion in the world. It was her horses. She liked to ride and she rode every day, whether the hour was morning, noon or afternoon, but preferably morning.

When she called the Count von Hohenegg in the morning on the telephone, although it was between nine and ten o'clock, she was already back from the Krieau[1], where she cantered from six o'clock as if distance meant nothing but the desire to put it behind horses' hoofs.

Behind her rode a groom, six paces back and two to the left. She rode her mare side-saddle and he rode his horse in white knee breeches and boots with light tops, her livery with cockade on his hat and so on. . . .

This groom was a former horse-trainer on the race-track in England. He was a Scotchman by birth, Jock Steers, but among the jockeys, race-track men, gamblers and roustabouts in stables and in the paddock, he had always familiarly been dubbed "Jock the lady-killer," and this title remained with him wherever he went, in England or the continent; the reason was he had a particular attraction for ladies and they loved him from all stations in life, sometimes a scullery maid, sometimes a laundress, often the wife of a butcher or petty tradesman, and he had even been known to receive a look from a real lady of the upper classes, though what his attractions were, unless hidden, could never have struck a casual eye.

Jock was of the bulldog type. His chin hung flaccid until he was aroused and then he had a fighting jaw

[1]small section in the Prater made up of little meadows and ditches for steeplechasing among amateurs.

that was undershot like any criminal or bully. He parted his black hair in the middle and brushed it to both sides until it was like a mat, straight but flat. His square face had no beauty; he was simply thick and dull. . . . Even his figure was dumpy, his waist too short, and without his livery he looked more like an underworld tout than a race-track gambler, although he always sought to dress in the flashy style of a book-maker. . . .

This man attracted Gisella, and, such was he, that she even attempted to have an affair with him and was succeeding pretty well.

She was the daughter of the war minister, a man second only in importance, you might say, to the emperor of Austria-Hungary. He had, certainly, the destiny of his country in hand, he could make war or peace, and did, eventually, succeed in making war! He had an unlimited power and held a portfolio that would gladly have been taken over by any number of men of ambition who were noble and therefore entitled to the position at court. . . .

Conrad von Steinbrueck was noble through nineteen generations, and Gisella had, therefore, almost as great a descendency as Franzl, since he harked back thirty-one times; but they both could count their ancestors among the warriors of the country and back of the warriors, the robber-barons, who plundered for more selfish gains, although the same ends of carnage and destruction.

Count von Steinbrueck was a widower for eight years. During this time he had never had a desire to marry, so his daughter was head of the household and grew up without mother-love or much paternal solicitude. And the reason was this: Conrad, Count von Steinbrueck, had been raised in the loose way of Vienna life. He was a man who lived and loved in his own style, heedless of tomorrow, extravagant, overbearing,

conceited, arrogant. . . . He kept a mistress and had many indiscretions of his youth and follies of his later life to look back upon. But this loose life never stopped with him. It was a part of his character and daily doings. He went to court and observed the etiquette very punctiliously—because outside of his official position he was equally low, unconcerned, immoral and degenerated. . . .

Coming from such a father, the traits of the Countess Gisella could be readily understood. She was shot through with singular independence of spirit, tainted with irresponsibleness, as it were. . . . Her life was one round of gaiety; she never thought outside, above or below the most extreme application of the Viennese formula: to live and let live!

She lived warily, watchful of all sides of the court life, learning intrigues from the wives of functionaries and hypocrisy from their husbands, although she was, above all else, not a hypocrite. When she loved, she was willing to cast over the world. This recklessness had a charm. It might have made her an empress. It made her the dupe of that most common of crafty underlings—a stableman. . . .

Gisella had, in her way, a most singular history.

Born in the highest estate, she sought the lowest. Surrounded by luxury, she craved sensations of the other extreme. She preferred to make love in a stable instead of a palace, to lie in the straw when plush and velour and rich damasks were offered her; beside the horses' hoofs and in the odour of barnyards she felt a transport of emotion that could, strangely, never be aroused when gold and jewels were around her person and the wooer was a count or baron, properly clean and pomaded.

In accord with some stray vanity which prompted him to direct his only child's footsteps along the ambitious path, Conrad von Steinbrueck selected from the em-

peror's retinue the man he proposed she should marry. There was an irony about this. He must be highborn, needless to say an equal or superior, and rich in his own right. . . . The morals of the young man were not in question. Young men of the upper court were all moral. That is, they had the moral right to do what they pleased,—before marriage particularly! Afterward, it was up to their wives. If the union did not succeed—well, it succeeded on the surface. Who knew the difference?

It was the proper thing for Franzl, the Count von Hohenegg, to be married to Gisella, the Countess von Steinbrueck. She was twenty-four and he was thirty-one.

When the blond young countess was presented to the irresponsible young man, a meeting took place between two equally sharp flints. Or it was the flint and the steel. She was very much a woman of the world. He was a man about town. He came to the meeting—expecting to be amused. She was full of sophisticated curiosity. . . .

When the flint and the steel had struck, both realized the match was in their station. It was as good as any. He accepted the burden of a fiancée as she her prospective marriage—part of a necessity, something both would have pleasantly avoided had not the world decreed it that young, wealthy people, without an obstacle, were expected to tie themselves together in order to satisfy some whim of condition. It belonged to a full life.

Franzl lived up to the requirements of just such an engagement, appearing in the cafés in mufti—against the rules of his army. He appeared in uniform when he appeared with Gisella, with his regiment, with his emperor. . . .

Gisella found her emotions absolutely untouched by this function—an engagement to be married to a count

of Hohenegg. She was naturally emotional. She craved love, excitement. Adventure was to her the only thing not regulated by household, servants and routine.

She had two maids to dress her, undress her. Champagne was a part of the diet in Palais Steinbrueck. She had it for breakfast, lunch and dinner, before breakfast, after dinner. . . . It is impossible to conceive when it was not being poured for the countess or her father. . . . Reckless but not dissolute, always in lively humour, never debauched, she was accustomed to constant stimulation. Her mind dreamed, but she had a sharp eye. Her eye-brows were arched from a perpetual semi-caustic and all-knowing look upon life. . . .

Her wardrobe was *outre* at first glance—more like a courtesan's than a woman of fashion. But what, after all, is the difference between so-called women of fashion in Vienna, and courtesans? The one, the other, lives extravagantly. Neither has a sense of moderation. Fashion *is* immoderate. She demands extremes in everything. . . . To be balanced and have an even keel is to belong to the middle classes.

Ball gowns constitute the greater part of women-of-fashion's wardrobes. Low-cut bodices belong as well to the lives of courtesans. Both wear negligees of flimsy texture, furs to drive in open carriages, habits for mounts,—tweeds are their disguise. A travelling suit of tweed lowers the woman of fashion and raises the courtesan to the level of her unobserved sisters; and to be a successful traveler it is necessary to be unobserved—especially on clandestine enterprises. . . . Gisella's wardrobe was then composed of these items. She had trifles like black silk underthings which made her blond beauty seem very fair; and the modesty of black in her case was the height of audacity—it outlined her form so distinctly.

When she arrived from her ride in the Krieau, and

the groom behind, before calling the Count von Hohenegg on the telephone the morning of Green Thursday, she cantered directly over her sidewalk into her courtyard, No. 7, Bartensteingasse, and dismounted before the inner doorway. . . .

It was rather dark in this doorway. Her *portier* stood outside.

Her groom gave her his elbow. She slipped to the ground.

Here it was only right and proper that she should dismiss the groom abruptly. Instead she allowed her hand to follow down his arm and come in contact with his hand; the fingers closed over one another. . . . The riding gloves did not prevent a distinct thrill from leaving her arm and going through her system to the tune of staccato heart beats! Exactly it was as if she had run a great distance....

Jock the lady-killer allowed the hand to remain in his without daring to give it a pressure. He understood highborn ladies. They went as far as they pleased, not he. They had distinct advances to make, and made them, but he could not even raise a finger or a hand—not yet!—with the Countess Gisella to show her he was a man, that he had any of the rights of males to be the aggressor.

A sly look, however, passed over his face and he gave her a sidelong glance that met her own. She could go far with him. He understood. He had only to wait, she would make the offer... She was about to satisfy a whim, and he stood perfectly motionless, the servant and the plaything, but nursing the fact that if she went far enough—the Countess Gisella—she would have gone just too far, and he would be the master!

Gisella's feelings overcame even prudence, which she had in such small quantities. She was moved and amorous, and adventure looked her in the face. . . .

The courtyard was empty; her mouth, on a level with his own, drew dangerously close—she kissed him! . . . and without waiting for a word or a sound, she drew away and entered her house.

Jock sent a significant smile after her. He took his horses and went into the stable. He had no respect for his mistress, but a great deal of vanity for himself, and felt, if she were conquered by his attractions, there was a lot he could expect—higher wages, her favours, hours of love, and maybe—his mind went so far, he could get her in deep enough to land a case of blackmail, if he wanted. This was the first grand lady that actually fell, all the way, for him.

He saw the other groom in the stable and passed him a wink—

"Some horsewoman, ain't she? That baby's got style, and you can take it from me, there's women can ride and women that can't, but she beats the Dutch."

"Rides like hell!" . . .

"Sure she rides like hell, but she knows when to pull 'em and they don't even sweat . . . that's the real goods. How long you been here, Bun?"

"Oh, four years," said the other groom, rubbing his forehead.

"Clean the mare first. She 's got her cinch open."

"Who done that?"

"She. She come pretty near to undress her. . . . And see here, Bunny, if the Countess von Steinbrueck comes into the stable to talk to me, you get out!"

"Hell, why?"

"You know damn well why!"

"No I don't . . . she talks horse to me, too."

"Well, she don't talk horse to me!" . . .

The countess went upstairs and into the hands of her maids. By the time she got out of her habit, the

champagne bucket arrived and she lay down on her *chaise longue* with a black cigar between her fingers.

She smoked cigars preferably.

Outside of the niche, where a double set of draperies flowed overhead and the *chaise longue* was placed, a Louis XV dressing-table stood and beside it a tabouret. The tabouret held a statue of Priapus at the Pool. She placed the Count von Hohenegg's photograph in full uniform before it. From a sense of humour, perhaps. . . .

The picture reminded her of some gossip she heard the night before. The war minister, her father, moved in much the same circle as Franzl. In court he was attendant in his official capacity and in reach of the young *Flügeladjutant*[1]; in gay circles he had the same inclinations. His mistress was Elvira, whom the three cavalrymen discussed at the Ringstrasse Café, and where they went, he went, and frequently was there at the same time.

But it was not often he spoke of these things. Of late he observed that Gisella was laughing more often and her wit was getting pointed. She even gave him a comrade's look and called him "Papa!" good-naturedly. . . .

He suspected she knew all about him!

"Come, where were you last night, papa?"

"With Franzl."

"And Franzl?—"

She knew more than he did! She undressed him with a glance. . . .

"Come, papa, you and I are not children,—or are we? We like to play! Well, tell me, were you and Franzl at the *Chapeau Rouge*[2]*?* I heard you singing the *Fiakerlied*[3] as you came in." . . .

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[1]wing-adjutant.

[2]a gay night café, catering to high-class society and cocottes.

[3]Song of the Coach, a gay song.

He swore under his breath.

"Of course you are late for the Hofburg. Go on, the emperor's *Fusswashung* can't wait . . . but don't be afraid that I am criticising you!" . . .

She had her maid call the Count von Hohenegg on the telephone.

"Hello, I'll detain him a little!

"Good morning, Franzl....."

V.

THE FOOTWASHING

"Good morning," replied Franzl.

"I heard you had a glorious time last night," said Gisella.

"Not quite so, my dear. I fretted through . . . saviour of a few wallflowers . . . didn't dance much, Lent, don't you know. . . . I missed you immensely, really . . . "

Their lips smiled in common although they were blocks apart. . . .

A trifle cynically Gisella countered:

"Well, you will have an opportunity this evening to make up for that. I expect you. . . "

"Now, really, my dear, I was just about to call you up. Will it be putting you out if I postpone the invitation? I have duti—"

"Postpone! You are formal. Say the invitation is lost and try again."

"I was just about to say that duties at the Hofburg will keep me very closely engaged the entire day and evening, and it may even be—"

"Of course," said Gisella, "service is service . . . and what are *her* colours, may I ask—since you wear them? . . . "

Franzl was about to lose his temper.

"I am surprised you look upon it that way," he said in his most suave tones—"and your father the minister of war. I should think you, of all women, would appreciate—"

"Tut, tut, tut, my dear . . . you make a mountain

of a hillock. To be frank with you, papa and I understand one another fully! If I were to say to you what I say to him—well, you would think me an indelicate woman. But, cheerily, Franzl,—the less said about ante-nuptials the better . . . I don't deserve your explanations."

"Meaning—"

"They wouldn't convince me."

"And if I don't make them—"

"So much the better!" . . .

"I'll see you tomorrow night."

"Don't strain." . . .

He hung up the phone, intending not to go. He left the room and outside shrugged his shoulders.

He would go, he wouldn't. . . what a woman! He hated her, he didn't love her, he didn't care. . . .

At the entrance his carriage waited, driver on the box, footman at attention. Briskly he stepped in and drove to the Hofburg. . . .

As he entered the inner palace gate the guards rose to attention, giving him a salute with the eyes right and their officer with the hand. He replied. At the Swiss door he was again met by a guard and at the side entrance likewise, where the carriage stopped, he dismounted and entered the Hofburg. . . .

From this time on he assumed an automatic aristocratic bearing. He was in the court atmosphere, about to be in the very court presence. . . . But Franzl was light-hearted and could not for very long content himself with etiquette.

Rudi and Nicki, his companions of the previous evening, were before him, and a third wing-adjutant, Prince Hochmut, a captain of the Life Guards Mounted and older than the others but as much of a companion as any. *Im Flügeladjutanten-Zimmer*[1] they waited on the ceremonial master. Franzl strode in—

[1]room of the wing-adjutants.

"Guten morgen, meine Herrschaften, wie gehts?"

"Auf zwei Beinen wie ein Storch!" responded the prince to Franzl: *"Ich hab gehört dasz du, du Teufel du, gestern Nacht mit der Königen vom Moulin Rouge davon gelaufen bist!"* he said facetiously.

"Lieber Kamerad, ich werd doch nicht auf dich warten," responded Franzl,—*"du läszt einem ja garnichts übrig. . . ."*

"My dear Franzl, you flatter me. *Apres moi, und so weiter. . . .* "[1]

"And you, Nicki? . . . and you, Rudi? . . . "

Each gave him his hand.

"And now, my dear friends, we go to the front—we have our duty by the emperor. . . . "

They rose in common.

On entering the Hall of Ceremonies they were greeted by people here and there in the Tribune. The prince returned to the door and gave a sign and on this entered, one after the other, the war minister, generals, diplomats, members of the clergy,—it was a solemn and stately procession. Before them marched the cross-bearer . . . after them the master of ceremonies with his office-staff in hand. Simultaneously the life guards posted behind the Tribune and on either side came to rigid attention.

A banquet table stood facing the Tribune and on the high bench sat twelve elderly men with faces like the apostles grown old . . . some were bald, all wrinkled and most of them wore heavy beards. . . . The master of ceremonies rapped three times with his staff: the archdukes entered, two abreast, Franz Ferdinand, heir

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[1] "Good morning, friends, how goes it?"
"On two legs like a stork!" responded the prince to Franzl: "I have just heard that you, you young devil, eloped with the queen of the Moulin Rouge last night!"
"My dear comrade, I don't wait on your permission . . . if I did, I would get left!"
"After me the deluge, et cetera."

apparent to the throne, Leopold Salvatore, Francis Salvatore, Frederick Eugène, Karl Franz-Josef. . . . Everyone in the room had risen except the old men on the bench, who represented the poor and the lowly of Austria-Hungary. The archdukes took their places before the table, facing the Tribune . . . —and then the emperor entered, Franz-Josef I in the uniform of white coat, red trousers with two gold stripes and spurs at his heels. His step was firm and manner slightly bored, very familiar with a task he performed for the sixty-fifth time! . . . He gave his *chapeau* to the head chamberlain . . . and this was the signal for the entrance of eight Arcieren and eight Hungarian guards, followed by six Truchsessen and eight pages who carried platters containing food. . . .

The emperor commenced the ceremony by placing one of the platters of food on the knees of each of the old men. As soon as the first platter had been placed, Frederick Eugène stepped forward and removed it. . . . Francis Salvatore removed the second, no sooner had it been laid down before the second man. . . . Franz Ferdinand the third, and so on. . . .

The ceremony now commenced to be very tiresome and there was a movement of restlessness among the younger guardsmen, of whom Franzl and Nicki and Rudi and Eitel, the Prince Hochmut, made four. . . .

They yawned behind their hands. The spectacle of a man, poor and scarcely accustomed to luxurious food or that in luxurious surroundings, being served with a platter only to have it summarily removed, was, with all its significance of humility on the all-highest emperor's part, rather ludicrous. Consequently, everyone was gratified when the duties had progressed as far as the twelfth and last man, and Karl Franz-Josef, after the prescribed custom, had relieved him of his platter untouched and presented it to a life guard for removal, as those preceding had done.

Lackeys cleared away the whole table. House officers commenced to unbuckle the shoes and take off the stockings on the right foot of each representative of the poor and aged in Vienna . . . others at the same time spread a long white sheet over their knees. The emperor removed his gloves.

Now the *praydieu*[1] was brought forward with a page to either side, carrying tall lit candles, and two acolytes who swung the censers . . . Two priests entered the room with a gold pitcher and basin, and approached Franz-Josef . . . the preliminaries were ready, the priest with the gold pitcher commenced at the first man, pouring the water slowly over his foot . . . the emperor knelt down and dried the foot with a towel, and so on. . . . This monotony became more difficult to attend with silence and attention at each man, and so the four chamberlains at the edge of the proceedings commenced to look at each other and then to chat in a murmured voice.

Nicki said to Rudi: "Franzl's idea was better . . . I would rather wash the feet of women, and young and sweet ones, too."

Rudi scarcely kept himself from bursting out laughing—

"Decidedly you are right!" . . .

"How can we tell Franzl the bathing party is a bloomer?"

"Don't. Let us substitute something else."

Prince Eitel Hochmut put in a word—

"Now, how is it in the emperor's presence you cannot leave off your silly *gequatch*[2] about women?"

"Don't listen," returned Nicki.

"*Nun,* how can it be helped, whether I listen or not? . . . the whole court can hear it! Who is the lady you are talking about, or ladies?" . . .

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[1]literally, pray-God, a kneeling stool.
[2]jabber.

"A party . . friends of Franzl. It has gone on the rocks, has the party . . . we have no place to hold it. Can you suggest—"

"Who are the ladies?"

Nicki enumerated them, the prince listened attentively . . . regretfully . . .

"How inconvenient! . . . Elvira goes to the Bourgthèâtre with the war minister to see Kainz[1]? . . . well, why does she not give you her house? . . . um, *das ist gemein* . . . what was to go on special? . . . "

Nicki put his hand to his lips and whispered,

"A bathing party! Gretel to go in—altogether, Franzl providing the champagne . . . *Röderer demi sec,* the real thing, and chilled to the taste . . . they have called the party off as we can't hold it in the open, can we?"

"However, I don't care . . . I would have been busy anyhow. But the next night that is a good night. Can you make it the next night?" . . .

"If you are invited, yes . . . however, rats and fiddlesticks! Who is going to tell Franzl? I cannot promise you anything . . . "

"Let me know. . . . "

"Ssh!"

Nicki poked him with his elbow, jerking his head toward the Tribune. The emperor had hesitated at the sixth man with one knee on the floor, listening as if he thought the voices he heard came from below. On May 1st—Socialists' Day, or the parade of the socialists without police interference, God forbid, in Vienna—frequently the voices came up from below, angry voices crying: "Down with the monarchy!" or "Down with the Jews! Long live Doctor Adler!" And the labour battalions, led by Adler the Jew, editor of the workers' paper and a red-hot social-democrat—

[1]Joseph Kainz, famous actor.

Sozi, in slang!—passed in parade with red neckties and red carnations and dirty finger-nails and the "Marsellaise" on their lips, before the Hofburg . . . mobs drunk on revolutionary words!—but loving each his or her Austria as that Austria was, a monarchy, and, principally, the old emperor, Franz-Josef I. "Down with capital! long live labour! long live the revolution!" Such voices, murmurs from below, came to the emperor's ears. No wonder he became apprehensive of May 1st, although Franz-Josef knew his people . . . children! . . .

He rode among them, the cries changed with the approach of the white feathers on the helmet of his bodyguard who rode beside the driver on the carriage and announced the coming of the emperor . . . all in one word they shouted now, so rapidly does contradiction follow in the minds of the Viennese:

"Down-with-the-monarchy-*hoch-der-Kaiser!*"

The emperor rode alone, without the customary aide, perfectly at ease, with *sang-froid,* not arrogant . . . kindly, saluting all the way in from Schönbrunn.[1]

Is it any wonder the people loved Franz-Josef?

. . . But hearing no further voices, the emperor was reminded that this was not May 1st—a momentary confusion in his mind due perhaps to his advanced years—and he continued the ceremony of the foot-washing. . . .

Hostile demonstrations against his court always troubled him. Against himself they were not levelled. But the "drones," as the social-democrats were in the habit of designating the functionaries who drew big pay and amused themselves at the expense of the red-shirted workers,—against these all the abuse in the world should be hurled!

The war minister was disliked, he was blamed for

[1]summer palace of the emperor.

the large expenditures of the army upkeep . . . the army was disliked, it used the money . . . Such a ceremony as a foot-washing for the purpose of humility frequently drew from orators on Socialists' Day—as they never forgot anything and used all situations to illustrate their point,—

"Let us weep at the remembrance, comrades, on Green Thursday, recall: the *Fusswashung!* . . . such farce, a mockery! They wash the feet of the poor and now we are persecuted, hounded, kicked by *their* feet! . . . brothers, let us arise," etc., etc. . . .

But they never arose . . . and meanwhile the foot-washing was finished. The emperor stood up and stretched out his hands to the priest who held the golden bowl full of water. Formally he washed his hands, drying them on a towel provided, took a platter from the hands of his treasurer, who was present, and hung the twelve bags of gold from the platter one each around the necks of the old men. . . .

VI

THE PRATER

Vienna . . . old . . . gray . . . historical . . . the town of joy and gladness and of mirth . . . of song, of wine, and heart affairs—also has sordid sorrows and grief. . . . But the grief is mingled with mirth and the sentimental tears with prankish laughter. . . . Dukes and princes are shoulders with beggars on the streets, and women chaste against women bold of face and manner. . . .

Vienna always had a code of morals all her own. Bravely idling away the hours to the strains of Strauss or Lehar, she never considered the morrow. It was truly Viennese to be careless, soul-free, ironic, only half-responsible . . . The *Strizzi*[1] following the palace watch with his coat collar half turned up, half down, represented the indecision and lazy indifference of the riff-raff. He carried his cigarette over his ear—bravado. "I don't know nothin', I don't hafta learn nothin', I don't hafta do nothin'; I'm a somebody anyhow, thank Gawd!" . . . But the blue Danube meant to him what it did to the washer-girls, strong and stout, the nurse-maids pushing baby carriages, the soldiers making love to them; *Stephansdom*[2] was a source of pride to a *Falott*[3] and to a *Wachmann*[4] . . . weren't they responsible for both!

Take their clothes away, they were still Viennese! it was impossible to destroy the nationality. . . .

Nowhere in all Vienna was this attitude better ex-

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[1]apache, lower world citizen.
[2]St. Stephen's Cathedral.
[3]same as *Strizzi.*
[4]policeman.

emplified than in the location known as the Leopoldstadt, the district chiefly composed of the great pleasure park, the Prater. It lay between the Danube and Danube Canal—a vast expanse, planted in trees, chestnut and linden mostly . . . It had green meadows stretching to the rim of the Danube.

Along the main avenue, the Praterstrasse, flowed the carriages, livery and *Fiaker,* the people on foot and bicycles, and motor-cars from the Ringstrasse over the Danube Channel under the Aspernbrücke[1], going to the trotting course at the Rotunda[2], or along the Hauptallee. . . . A street car took the less fashionable into the Volksprater[3] which was formed like a midway with concessions and booths on every hand, and small cafés with stringed orchestras, and giants and dwarfs and such entertainment. . . . The poor came along like beggars, the clerks with Sunday money to spend in their pockets.

Thus were all classes represented.

A railroad whistles over the viaduct that is at the Prater gate. Under this is a broad, sunny street ringing with laughter and the jingle and jangle of bells. Music flows out of the tin-pan variety that is heard on circus lots and in fairs. . . . Summer finds little shade and no fresh air in this street, too much coal-damp from the engines on the viaduct drops to the Wurstelprater[4] below. But the people lounge here the entire day, leaning against fences and on the copings, sitting like flies under the heat of Summer, perfectly quiet. They are watching the stream of pleasure-seekers from the capital flow past: servants in a hurry, tradesmen with wives and children, a cook, a student. . . . Wagons

[1]bridge of Aspern, leading from Stubenring to Praterstrasse.
[2]great dome and building remaining from Exposition of 1873, located by trotting race course in Prater.
[3]people's Prater.
[4]Wurstel from Hanswurst, Austrian "Punch and Judy"—the Volksprater.

rattle along here even on Sunday, which lasts, with the Wurstelprater, from Monday to Saturday!

Every day is Sunday to the celebrant. Nor can the midway open too soon in the spring to be called summer-time.

Now it is April.

With the first breath of warmth all the booths opened their shutters and set out barkers to call in, with their silly phrases and stupid cajolleries, the earliest of the summer visitors. "The Queen of the Night," in the very first booth after the gypsy restaurant, set a star of pasteboard on her forehead, straightened her tinsel robes and waited behind closed doors for her customers. . . . The deep-sea diver tried out his helmet which never went below the surface of the water! A light wind, crossing the fields of the Prater, started a rustling among the chestnut branches where the first buds were opening their wax petals before the leaves....

Between the Gasthaus Garten[1] and the little box which houses the goddesses, Daphne, Fortuna and Flora, were the dwarfs, tall as children of five, with voices—each of the males—like thunder! How they bellowed, shouting for themselves! . . . the children stood and laughed outside, frightened but fascinated, like their elders before some contortionist or freak of nature with which the Wurstelprater was full. . . .

The father-dwarf commenced, bellowing so loudly he shook the trees—"Kassa! Kassa! Kassa! Kass'! Kass'! Kass'! . . . " he clapped his hands, rang a bell lustily. . . . "Lotsa liddle dwarfs! sister dwarf . . . brother dwarf . . . mother, father, grandmother . . . mother-in-law dwarf . . . wife dwarf . . . myself dwarf . . . children dwarfs . . . lotsa liddle dwarfs!" . . .

They were shown between a two-headed calf and a gigantic lady. . . . Formerly the booth was a monkey

[1] a garden restaurant.

theatre but now it swarmed with eight little men and women, dancing and amusing the crowd. . . .

Astarte, the aerial wonder, came next. Her barker was very lively and screamed continually, most agonisingly . . "Dis is no fake, no schwindle . . . go in, come oudt . . . you want your money back? I give it two times over! Go in, come oudt. . . . " The aerial wonder was presented before the booth in pink tights and a green sash around the interesting part of her body, heavy-lidded and stolid. . . . In the Gasthaus the people were drinking beer, listening to the clatter of plates and clink of fine glasses from the Eisvogel Café[1] across the street. This Eisvogel was the real restaurant of the Volksprater, with tables set underneath the chestnut trees and finest wines and liquors served. The *Oberkellner*[2] had a singular way of greeting all stylish comers: "Ah, my fine sir, my fine ladies, a table for six—eight? Here, Johann, make the *Herr Graf*[3] at home!" and he removed the cloaks and gathered as many waiters as possible with signals right and left. It was a commercial application of the adjective *gemüthlich*—a natural attitude with the Viennese who extend hospitality among all classes, and in this instance played for an excellent tip. . . . The waiters slid away, having recognized the *"Herr Graf"* as a somebody. The first on the ground remained, dusting with his napkin before the guests, lifting the coats and reading the names of the gentlemen in their inside coat pockets. If the label were that of a fashionable tailor, further attention. . . .

"Ah, Mr. von Schmidt, how are you this evening?" says the sly duster with the napkin—"What can I bring the ladies, *Herr Baron?* a little *caviar* . . .*Chateau Yquem* or *Chateau Lafitte?* . . . "

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[1]Icebird Café, the best in the Volksprater.
[2]head waiter.
[3]Sir Count, your excellency.

The Eisvogel was equipped with a ladies' stringed orchestra.

Across the street was the shooting-gallery of Schani Huber, and beside this the Prater fire department, consisting of engine and hosecart for emergencies. . . . The concession of the merry-go-round, belonging also to Schani Huber, came next—a large space filled with little children and young grown-ups to whom the whirling carriages and horses and elephants were a constant amusement. . . . An organ played here and the attraction announced:

"SCHANI HUBER'S WELTBERUMTES RINGELSPEIL—ZUM CALAFATTI."[1]

Merry-go-rounds were not invented solely for children. In the beginning they had another significance which still holds good among the middle-classes . . .

"Das Leben ist ein Ringelspiel, da wird oft manchem bang,
Dem einem ist zu kurz die Tour, dem anderen zu lang."[2]

Beside this story of life in allegory, was the meaning the wooden horses held for the riders who imitated, with some degree of imagination, their betters on the *corso*—who rode, striking the inanimate flanks of the mechanical steed with a thin bamboo cane and thought themselves actually for the moment one of the wealthy class; who sat in the gaudy imitation carriages, raised their parasols and bowed right and left as the turntable sped around. . . . For this class of people, Sunday is their make-believe day; the balance of the week is work, small wages and poverty. They look upon their more fortunate brothers and sisters in the park,

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[1]Schani Huber's World Famous Merry-Go-Round, à la Calafatti—the inventor.

[2]"Life is a merry-go-round of joys, of tears, of song,
To one the trip is oft too short, another one too long!"

on the Hauptallee, with envy . . . they despair of ever being in a fine carriage or upon a real horse, cantering along as if each day brought further pleasure and no drudgery. . . .

The shooting-gallery the same. The emperor went *auf die Jagd* . . rich men went hunting on game preserves . . . the poor, never. They placed an air-rifle in the gallery to shoulder and shot wooden ducks. . . .

Before the merry-go-round by the entrance a dummy stood, having purple, swollen cheeks, badly worn out and scuffed—the *Kraftmaschine*[1], for the purpose of testing the strength of those who had a superabundance on the Prater—who donned a boxing-glove and struck with full force this poor battered object and registered the strength of the blow on the scale behind. . . .

Schani Huber owned this instrument also. If he had placed it, or several, before the midnight cafés in Vienna, it is possible many crimes, committed by customers badly liquored, would have been avoided, as the *Kraftmaschine* absorbs the surplus energy of young drunkards and fools. . . .

Huber, a rotund man with bearded face and suave exterior, at heart a villain, was his own spieler:

"Jen'l'men, here's your prize Herkalees masheen! Meshur your strength, watcha good for, watcha lift, watcha push . . . how hard k'n y' hit? . . . three cents, a nothin', a nothin'!"

He flicked a thin cane he carried into the face of the *Kraftmaschine.* When business was poor he commenced to guy the giggling girls over the instrument. He turned them to his merry-go-round—

"H'lo sweetie! 'ave-a-ride? . . . nice white horse just waitin' f' you . . . 'ave-a-carridge? set in a gondoola, V'neshun gondoola? . . . c'm on, little one,

[1]strength machine.

get y' tickets in the booth, five c'nts, only five c'nts—best ride in the place! Here 's y' *Karrusell,* same ol' *Karrusell*—h'lo sweetie, c'm on, you there, kid—s'm sweet kid, aintcha? . . . "

He kept the spiel going. He kept the merry-go-round turning. His wife, of a different calibre, sat in the ticket booth and tore off the five cent rides from a roll. Weary, she was forced to hear his constant drivel, see him patronise girls and women of all ages. He oogled them all. . . . . He not infrequently patted one on the shoulder and took her hand—familiarities giggled over and accepted with coy looks and immediate patronage of the merry-go-round, as if he made presents of rides, which he never did. . . .

Schani Huber was a hard character—one of those hard ones to get on with. The Volksprater disliked him. His nearest concessionaire, a Mrs. Rossreiter, who exhibited herself for her stoutness and had also a Punch and Judy theatre, was separated from the Huber booths by a narrow alley leading to the Prater park in the rear of the street. . . . She wished this alley were wider—that it might be the trotting-course, for instance, which was a hundred feet across—only that Huber should be that much farther away.

She even thought at one time of making a change and taking another location far up and across the street, only the sad face of Marianka Huber softened her heart, and the child playing the grind-organ of the Ringelspiel, whose face was also solemn, prematurely haggard, and who loved her. . . . For their sakes she remained. But the fat lady, formerly belonging to a circus, who had saved her money and was able to be a concession owner and employ two people now, often felt herself befouled by his inanities.

He abused his wife. The whole Prater knew it. His organ-grinder, the child of seventeen that took the tickets of the merry-go-round, plagued by his atten-

tions, unwelcome and unwholesome, received a cuff after a caress, neither earned, both most repugnant and repellant. . . .

Agnes Urban, the child, had been in his employ for one season—the one before. She was forced to do this. Her father, the manipulator of the Punch and Judy theatre under Mrs. Rossreiter, was, unfortunately, that calibre of man who is always good, always willing, but belongs to the down-and-outs and can never get his feet sufficiently under him to support wife and child. . . . Thus Agnes, a mere thin wisp of beautiful girlhood, stunted in opportunity and faced by the blank wall of poverty, took up her work at Huber's . . . hour by hour she turned the grind-organ, always sending forth old tunes and new, sounding alike. Never smiled, except it was at Boniface. Boniface was the monkey at Rossreiter's, the companion of Bartholomew. Bartholomew Gruber was the hunchback, he spieled at Rossreiter's.

Rossreiter's concession was her haven. Sylvester Urban manipulated the theatre. She pitied him—pitied her father . . . he was so capable in her eyes and held so menial a position.

Agnes' mother was an invalid. Only this was necessary to add to the squalor of the family—that the mother should be an invalid, lying on a mattress, dying of consumption. Because to the poor it is squalid to be sick. Only the rich can afford the romance of weakness; only to the financially able can doctors be employed and nurses kept on salary. . . . Mrs. Urban never was waited on by a nurse; her only doctor was the charity doctor who charged fifty cents for spending four minutes upstairs above the Rossreiter concession in a wretched room, devoid of sunlight, dingy, small, ill-smelling. . . .

Agnes lived in this room—in her own little corner. Sylvester lived here, disconsolate, sobbing over the in-

valid. A single window looked into the Prater park where the chestnut trees bloomed and occasionally a bird sang. Some flew overhead—large birds, with outstretched wings like vultures, that make people shiver!

So they looked to the young woman. But they were only food-scavengers and flew in and out, not around, looking for leavings on the Wurstelprater.

Huber lived above his concession. Above the narrow alley the rooms faced each other, looking into one another's four walls like the dingy frame of a manhole with soiled curtains on the windows. . . . Huber had one room, Marianka another, connecting,—it was a little apartment and much better kept than Sylvester's one room. . . . The owner of the merry-go-round could have afforded even more, but he pinched at home in order to squander abroad. He threw out money when he was in a lively humour, but it was never on his wife. It was on some girl who caught his fancy and was shrewd and calculating; she got his money and laughed in his stupid, enamoured face. . . .

Yes. Vienna . . . old . . . gray . . . historical . . .the town of lust of life, of hysterical extremes of joys and sorrows—was the merry-go-round . . . Joy in sorrow, laughter on the lips and chill at the heart!

Who saw into the *upper* floors of the Wurstelprater?

Only the birds with outstretched wings, like vultures, that flew in and out, or around? looking for—what?

The Prater is the pleasure park of all Vienna. . . .

VII

NIGHT FOLLOWING MORNING

In the Volksprater is a ferris-wheel which can be seen at a long distance. This *Riesenrad*[1] is a sort of electric torch which attracts the eye from all corners.

Franzl, Nicki and Rudi, disappointed at the failure of Elvira's party, which was to have the full immersion of Gretel in a bath of champagne, could not very well go home and sit before the fireside. Young cavalrymen are not attuned that way. They have a feverish desire and must be always on the go.

After studying pro and con, it was at last decided—the spring being in the blood and the *Riesenrad* revolving slowly in the far distance over the Aspernbrücke, to sally to the Praterstern[2], and thither to the Eisvogel café.

This is a something that gets under the skin: to sit in a wine hall and drink green wine in April!

Every *Wiener*[3] feels it . . . he has to answer the call like nesting-time to the birds. . . .

But the party consisted of five at the Eisvogel. Gretel would not, or did not, have the inclination, so Franzl tried to absent himself also.

"Four or six—but five?" he objected weakly.

Fanny, who had a lisp, for once took the lead herself:

"Leths make him thtay! Don't you wanna thtay? . . . pleath . . . " she placed her hand on his, looking into his eyes appealingly.

His comrades kicked his shins under the table.

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[1]giant wheel with suspending cars for passengers.

[2]entrance to Prater where many streets come together, has statue of Adm. Tegetthoff.

[3]a citizen of Wien—Vienna.

Franzl made up his mind, on the strength of this—to stay.

The officers were again in civilian dress. This was the reason:

"I'm an engaged man," said Franzl, "I can't be seen in public—"

"Without——?"

"Exactly."

That was the way it had been decided. Now he ordered wine and cucumber salad . . . breaded chicken . . . they looked about and gave generous tips and wore the evening on.

Presently it began to be very tiresome making endless conversation. Only Bohemian artists or servant girls who are ranting at their mistresses behind their backs, can do this. . . . Music from the *Panoptikum*[1] and tinpan pianos before the concessions floated through the air. Bells jangled from a dozen directions; the rushing sound of the *Rutschbahn*[2], an American invention, came in the Eisvogel like thunder repeated constantly! There were cries and hoarse voices mingled, the miniature locomotive shrieking,—all those sounds which herald a midway . . . all the smells, sights . . . shooting from the gallery and the clang of the gong from a bull's-eye! . . .

The ladies' orchestra, strumming briskly, in vain could not overcome sound multiplied and thrown back and forth so many times.

However above a midway, riff-raff and so forth, Count von Hohenegg, Count von Uebermut and Baron von Leichtsinn felt, they could not deny the sound of revelry. . . .

They looked at one another.

"Ooh, leths take in a merry-go-round . . . and a Punth and Judy thow!"

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[1]wax figure emporium.
[2]roller coaster.

Fanny, clapping her hands, voiced the spirit of all.

"Yes . . . leths . . . " said Franzl, mocking her.

They started out arm in arm into the swarm of sound and bedlam of humanity that eddied them about and crushed and crowded them from booth to booth. Here was the street-car, switching at the station and turning trolley for the city. The dwarf sang out his "Kassa! Kassa! Kassa! Kass'! Kass'! Kass'! Lotsa liddle dwarfs! sister dwarf . . . brother dwar—" They lost the rest . . . The mountain giant with several medals from a Chicago show, and fortune-tellers and acrobats, shouting from every platform and performing tricks,—Astarte, the Gasthaus Garten— . . . at last they were before the shooting-gallery and the gong rang out, announcing a hit!

"Shoot!" said Mitzerl, speaking loud to make herself heard.

"What?"

"You, Franzl . . . shoot in the gallery!"

The Count von Hohenegg, who went with the emperor *auf die Jagd* in the Tyrol, took air-gun to shoulder in the Volksprater and obediently aimed at a clay heart.

Bang!

He hit it.

"Ooh, thee that! he hit it!" screamed Fanny.

Bang!

He hit a second . . . a third . . . a fourth. . . .

The row of hearts succumbed one after the other. . . . The attendant, whose admiration was given grudgingly, came with two pasteboard boxes at the end of the shooting and presented them to Franzl as premiums for his line of cracked hearts:

"Der Herr Graf kann aber schiessen! der Mann ist kein Sontagsjäger[1] . . . " He addressed him as

[1]"The count knows how to shoot . . . he is no Sunday hunter."

count because he was well-dressed. . . . On Rudi's and Nicki's breasts, for their marksmanship, he placed a small medal . . . and the party left, going past the fire department and into the concession marked: *"SCHANI HUBER'S WELTBERUHMTES RINGELSPIEL —ZUM CALAFATTI."* . . .

"Ooh, here 'th the merry-go-round!" cried Fanny.

It was in full swing, soldiers and children were riding the horses, servant girls sat in the carriages; on a caparisoned elephant a stout wet-nurse displayed her legs clear up to the thighs, enormous, round and fat . . .

Schani Huber stood before his platform, bamboo cane in hand, the crowd swarming around him—

"'Ave-a-ride . . . 'ave-a-ride . . . only five c'nts—getcha tickets in the booth! *Karrusell,* same ol' *Karrusell*—h'lo sweetie, c'm on, you there, kid . . . 'ave-a-ride? . . . " He was teasing the young servant-girls, striking them on the legs with his cane . . . spitting, letting out long shots of tobacco juice. . . . "Oooh you babee-doll, c'm on, c'm on, nice white horse just waitin' f' you! . . . "

When he spied Franzl and the party from the Eisvogel, his face took on its broadest smile. He made them a bow and looked with some respect at the girls' nice clothes and gold chatelaine that Mitzerl carried—"Tick'ts in the booth, right this way . . . " Franzl bought five tickets from Marianka, the sad-eyed woman in the booth, and they waited, watching the hawkers passing with lemonade and candies to which the dust was sticking and had to be blown off, and the wagons with sausages steaming in huge caldrons. . . . Several small children, running around under the feet of the crowd, begged for a penny and sometimes got it . . . sometimes a cake . . .

The merry-go-round came to a stop. Mitzie took an elephant, "Ooh gee, you'll think you are on an

oasis! Sit next to me, Franzl . . . Fanny, you sit on a horse!"

"I don' want to . . . I'll thit in a carriage!"

"Gwan! nobuddy sits in a carriage!" shouted a small boy in her ear; "move up . . . take a horse!" . . .

Fanny decided on the horse but insisted that Franzl hold her on it, to which Nicki objected, and with one argument and another the merry-go-round was about to start when the ticket-girl came to them for the slips of pasteboard bought from Marianka's roll. . . .

"Go to him," Mitzerl waved her over to Franzl; Fanny did the same. . . . Nicki, looking closely at Agnes' pathetic and beautiful face, nudged Rudi. . . . "Give a look!" and he pulled down the corners of his mouth and lifted his eyebrows, expressive of astonishment. . . . "Not so bad . . . eh, what? psst, Franzl!" . . .

Franzl, about to give up his tickets, looked the way his comrade specified—into the face of Agnes Urban. He saw two eyes set wide apart in a comely way. The hair was dark and drawn down closely around the face, which, if it had been allowed to grow animated, he decided, would have made a strikingly attractive picture. She had, in fact, just heard some disconcerting news about the condition of her mother through Sylvester, who left his post and went up above Rossreiter's a few moments before, and her cheeks were very pale. She had a hopeless expression about her drooping lids, her fine nose also twitched as if she were suppressing a desire to cry . . . the mouth was refined and shy, eyelashes dark and long and curved like a baby's. . . . She was wearing a wash-dress of light material with a short jacket over, originally dark blue but now a shabby brownish-green. . . .

Franzl still held the tickets, which were folded, in his hand. As she reached out for them, he allowed his hand to close over hers and gave her a further,

penetrating look. Then, smiling broadly, he released them and watched her smile ever so faintly at this exhibition of friendliness, one of the few she had received in her life. . . . She looked over at Huber, who had not budged from the ticket booth after taking Franzl there and who awaited, as usual, the sign of her last collection and leaving of the merry-go-round, to start the machinery. Huber frowned, annoyed by the delay. He gave her a harsh signal—"Get down, cut it out and let those guys alone! What in the hell do you think you're doing?" That was the ugly expression on his face.

She tore the tickets in two, gave Franzl the stubs, and ran off the platform before he could speak with her. She reached the grind-organ and threw the bits of pasteboard in her hand into a little box fastened over the organ handle . . . and, as she put her hand on the crank, Huber blew the starting whistle. Slowly the merry-go-round started to revolve. The horses began to go up and down, sliding on poles, the carriages swept, one after the other, full of passengers, about the circle, passing the grind-organ and the solitary girl driving music from the wizened box. . . .

Franzl followed her with his eyes, her figure, even less than the medium height, was slender almost to the point of emaciation. . . . Around and around went the *Karrusell.* Huber was watching him as intently as he watched the girl . . . he met his eyes on every trip—vindictive, stealthy eyes. . . . He tried to look unconcerned, the expression of the girl haunted him. . . .

What had this man to do with her? It looked almost as if he were watching him *because he watched her!*

This is the best way to arouse the interest of anyone —to afford them curiosity. Franzl was a cavalryman and had no patience with a look from an underling. For far less than this insolence they struck them down

in Vienna! He felt his blood mounting against Huber as he told himself, for this look, he would be twice as attentive to the girl . . . besides, she was a nice little thing, had beautiful eyes. Her mouth looked sweet, like a little robin's, ready to be kissed. He even imagined himself kissing it. . . .

Having still in his possession the two packages from the shooting-gallery, he opened them and perceived—as he expected—that they contained each a doll, the usual reward in a shooting-gallery. One was a little soldier, the other a girl doll. And he resolved then and there to give the little soldier doll to the girl who turned the grind-organ—to spite that bearded rotter with the dirty look! Also, because he felt that way—like striking up an acquaintance with her.

Who was she? He didn't know. An urchin, some petty tradesman's daughter; but she had a sweet modesty that recommended itself, something not hitherto experienced in women by the Count von Hohenegg at court or café. . . . He resolved to dismount at the first moment and give her the doll.

Meanwhile Huber had approached Agnes——

"Say, here, that don't go . . . that innocence of yours," he snarled from the side of his mouth,—"it don't go. It's the bunk! You make goo-goo eyes at a feller what never done nothin' for you at any time . . . and for me, who done everythin' for you and that lazy father and whinin' mother of yours—what do I get? Nothin'! You see, you'll find out—it don't go to pick up strays when you got a friend like me, Agnes. . . . Now, you see here, you look out for me—no foolin'—understand?"

He shook his bamboo cane directly under her nose, he spat viciously—"Let 'im alone, I say!"

She did not respond. A tear, which had been disengaging itself slowly from her lid, now slipped down her pallid cheek. . . . Franzl, swinging around in

the carriage, saw her turn away. She hung her head, attempting to brush something from her face with her free hand. . . . He wondered what was the matter and had a good notion to jump from the platform, whirling as it was! What had the brute with the stick to say to the girl that was so damned important?

Besides Franzl, one other watched this byplay in the Prater, who sat in the ticket booth. It was Marianka Huber, she saw something that escaped him: Huber's sensuous way of studying his employée . . . his narrow, calculating look going over her frail figure, appraising it. Marianka suffered intensely from these callous displays before her eyes. . . .

But the *Karrusell* had gone around too many times already. Huber blew his whistle.

"Oooh, lethe go around again!" cried Fanny. "I haven't had half enough! . . . make 'em go round again, Mitthie . . . gettup! . . . gettup!" She struck the wooden flank of the white horse with Nicki's cane, borrowed for the occasion. "He'th tho eathy ridin'. . . ."

"Sure we'll go again . . . get the tickets, Franzl!"

Franzl dismounted in haste to get them. When the merry-go-round started he did not ride, but gave the tickets into Agnes' hand and followed her to the box where she dropped them.

Much commotion had taken place, many riders mounted and dismounted. . . . Huber's infernal whistle blew. . . .

"See here," began Franzl, "do you have to grind that organ eternally? What do you get out of it, may I ask?" He had not intended to say this, but was led astray by the girl's mounting embarrassment. . . . "I—I never thought of finding anything as beautiful as you down here. . . ." His voice commenced to drop into a lower key.

"Didja come all the way down here t'tell me that?"

"No, but as I'm here and believe it, I'm telling you so," he retorted, her flippancy taking him at once, it was so opposed to her modest exterior.

She was trying to read his expression——

"You're kiddin' me . . ."

"I'm dead in earnest, you're a mighty pretty girl."

"Gee, that so? You flatter like a lieutenant . . . you look like a swell . . . are you?"

"What makes you think so?"

"I dunno." She looked him over again, grinding the organ. . . . "I just thought so . . . you don't do any work with your hands, they're too white!"

Franzl found some amusement in inspecting his hands.

"I suppose you would like me better if I were a lieutenant?"

"Not so. I don't like soldiers . . . father says all they do is get girls into trouble. . . ."

"Er,—is your father here?"

"He is workin' the Punch and Judy," she tossed her head in the direction of Rossreiter's. . . . "He says soldiers ain't good for anything . . . they live off our hard-earned money and think that we are dirt. . . ."

"Well, to tell the truth, I'm not a soldier," Franzl lied adroitly,—"I'm a very peaceful man."

A more kindly expression came at once into her eyes. "Then, what *are* you doin'?"

"Guess?"

She stood off to inspect him, but was restrained by her duty to the organ. Automatically Franzl felt himself in the gayest of moods . . . he dropped his hand on hers, and turned the crank in common with her; then she withdrew her hand and he was grinding it all alone!

"You're—you're," said Agnes, "a wine agent!"

"Ha-ha-hahaha!"

"You tell me!"

"Well——"

"Yes——"

He looked down at his necktie, an inspiration came to him.

"I—I'm—a necktie salesman," he said, thinking this was a huge joke. . . .

"A necktie salesman?"

"Uh-huh . . . now tell me, what's your name?"

"Agnes . . . Urban. . . ."

"Agnes. I like that!"

"What's yours?"

"Mine is Franz—Meier. Just call me Franz. . . ."

"I like yours, too," she admitted.

"Tell me, Agnes, do you ever have a day off? I mean, can you get away from here?"

"No . . . my mother is very sick, and when I am not working I am with her."

"That's too bad . . . but—how can I see you again?"

"They haven't stopped the bus-line down here . . . have they?"

"Would you want me to come?"

"I don't care," she responded flippantly, but ameliorated it—"I mean . . . I don't mind. . . ."

Franzl sighed—

"Hum, well, that's better. And look here, I've got something for you—he's a soldier. I won him in the shooting gallery . . . does he look like a swell?"

"For me!"

"For you . . ."

Ecstatically she clasped the doll. . . .

During this time Huber had been beside himself with rage. He struck out in all directions with his stick, his beard seemed to stand on end from his chin. When the whistle had blown, Franzl was still grinding the organ. . . .

He heard Fanny's voice—

"We thould thertainly let theth people know what a dithtinguished man they had juth now for a muthithian. . . ."

He dropped the handle at once, angered, turning to her—

"All right, are you ready? Have you people had all the ride you want?" He slipped his arm through Fanny's: "Come, don't say anything. I just told the girl I was a necktie salesman . . . it would spoil her little romance at the very start. . . ."

They joined the others.

"He told her he wath a necktie thalthman," giggled Fanny.

"You didn't, Franzl?"

"What a little devil!" exclaimed Nicki. "Look, this fellow has evidently something to say to you."

It was Huber, so beside himself still that no effort of will could calm him. . . . "Look here . . . come here . . . *die Graftmasheena,* see—*grad so wie das verdamte ding . . . so ver I de Leit 'handele de ma inde Wag koma. . . .*"[1] He threw himself at the *Kraftmaschine* and aimed a fearful blow at the empurpled cheek! . . . *"Grad so . . . und so . . . und so. . . ."*

[1] very bad slang for "As I treat this machine, so I treat anyone who comes in my way . . . just so and so and so!"

VIII

THE FAT LADY

When Franzl chose the occupation of necktie salesman, it came to him as an inspiration. Such a petty tradesman's business was the lowest next to actual day labour. If he intended to win the affection of a girl like Agnes, he could not have chosen two more adroit means—occupation and the present of a little soldier doll to the girl. She never had a present from anyone before. This young man was handsome and friendly . . . and he gave her a present!

No sooner had the party from the merry-go-round departed, than Huber, having shown Franzl and his friends what to expect from him if they again came into the concession, by hammering the *Kraftmaschine,* strode with his large, clumsy boots to Agnes, still grinding at the organ. . . .

"You seen what I done to your friend? I showed 'im, the dirty cuss . . . I'll hammer the stuffin's outta him if he ever shows up 'round here. Where th' hell d'you think you are, anyway, pullin' such raw stuff . . . cuttin' up and showin' your best smile to them kind? Looky here, Agnes, you don't know when you gotta friend. . . . I'll be damned, he comes 'round here, hands you a laugh—wotcha got there?"

He perceived the box Franzl had left, which the child was at this instant trying to cover with her body to keep it out of sight, holding it behind her against the organ. . . .

"Gimme that!"

He grabbed the box and tore the cover off. Seeing the doll inside, he ripped it out of the covering with an

oath, tossed it to the floor and commenced to mutilate it. Agnes could not repress her tears. . . .

"Wotcha cryin' for? Say, wotcha mean cryin' over a thing like that?" With this he came to her, using his most wheedling tones—"If you was good to me, now—well, there ain't nothin' I wouldn't do for you, you know that . . . you're such a purtee girl now. . . ." He tried to stroke her hair, but she recoiled from him. The crowd was thinning, but still swarmed about them . . . she looked around like a hunted pheasant. . . . "C'mon now, don't be babyish . . . be a good—liddle—girl. . . ." Huber laughed heartily and walked away, swinging his stick. When his back was turned, she leapt forward into the crowd, gathering up the doll, a crumpled mass, a thing without shape, and the best part of one cheek crushed into a pulp. She lifted it from the floor, crooning over it, patting and caressing it. . . .

Was this not a present? Had it not been brought in friendliness to recall to her mind vividly the young man who was a necktie salesman, who had made her this present?

Directly this young man had gone with his party, he stood before the neighboring concession—*"ROSS-REITER'S WUNDERSALON . . . DIRECT FROM PARIS."*

This wonder palace consisted of the fat lady herself, her Punch and Judy theatre, an armless and legless woman, and several other sensations. . . .

The barker was just bringing out for the seventy-fourth time that evening: "Ladies and gentlemen, walk right in . . . the greatest performance ever seen begins right now . . . this—is the lady without lower body and without arms . . . don't push. . . ."

But there was no one pushing. Huber stood right there, having come over, after tormenting Agnes, to

steal away what customers were in his rival's booth. This was a method he pursued regularly. He harangued them, drew them over to his own concession, using any means to anger the fat lady and her clown, Bartholomew Gruber, the hunchback, the *Ausrufer*.[1] . . .

He commenced again: "This is Boniface, the famous young orang-utang . . . direct from the jungle of Africa. . . ." The monkey took off his hat—a liberty cap—three times, bowing from his chain to the stray visitors. He dug his paw into a barrelful of nuts and scattered them to the spectators. . . . "From these two wonders you can guess what you will see inside! Please don't push . . . there is a place for everyone. . . ."

Scarcely had he said this when Huber pushed to the front—

"Who the hell wants to see your show?" he shouted. "Nobody! All these ladies and gentlemen want to ride on Huber's famous merry-go-round. . . ."

The fat lady intervened her bulk: "Not so . . . not so! They want to stay right here—you filthy pig! you ox!" . . . She launched herself at him and started to beat him with her fists, pudgy and soft, but backed up by a pair of flashing beady eyes surrounded in her face with fat. . . . "Get out—get out!" They fought together, slapping each other's faces. . . .

Meanwhile the monkey liberated himself from his hook on the wall where he was fastened by a chain, and, drawing the chain after him, started to walk away on his hind feet. . . .

"Stop him! Come back . . . don't you see, he is running away?" This was shouted by the armless and legless lady from her pedestal. . . "he has stolen

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[1] man who calls out from a concession, a barker.

the nuts . . . Boniface! Boniface! come back here!"

But, to her anxiety, nobody pursued him.

Franzl and the Eisvogel party, standing far out on the Volksprater, did not pursue him because he went in the opposite direction, crawling under an elevated platform and disappearing into the alleyway which separated his booth from Huber's, adjoining. . . .

"Ooh," said Fanny, losing track of him, and looking at the woman without lower body—"thee this poor woman . . . thee hath no legth or no armth . . . ithn't it pathetic?"

Franzl commenced to laugh, "I'll wager you she has a husband and five kids!" . . .

Fanny was shocked.

"Count, you have no thympathy for anyone . . . do you believe in anything exthept yourthelf?" . . .

"Not much," admitted Franzl; still, he had the girl doll in his hand, and it made him laugh at himself . . . if he had given it to the little organ-grinder now, to keep with the other, the mate. . . . But he kept it for himself.

When Boniface went out on his pilgrimage, he strode directly into the Huber booth where Agnes was standing, and approached her from the back. He was perfectly tame with anyone who knew him, and placed his brown paw on her hand, where it was twisting the organ handle, which gave her an unaccustomed shock! First of all she thought it was Franzl, and then she thought it was Huber,—but it was only the little furry paw of the animal, and she commenced to play with him, and then allowed him to turn the handle to give her relief. Quite a crowd gathered. Huber returned—

"Well, I'll be damned! Get outta here!" he started blaspheming—"you dam' brute, get out!" He commenced to strike the orang-utang with his stick, who

lunged at him . . . but, fortunately for the proprietor of the *Ringelspiel,* he was still on his chain, trailing behind him, and Agnes caught him up by it and held him away from Huber.

"Don't anger him," she cried, "don't—look out!"

"I'll kill him!"

"He'll kill you!"

"Haw-haw-haw!" he shouted.

"But I can't hold him!"

"Well, let 'im go. . . ."

She dared not do this, as the savage little fellow, snarling at his enemy, bared his fangs, and would have wrapped himself around the throat of the man, biting him and strangling his life out with his thin powerful arms. . . .

At precisely the moment when she was exhausted and would have let Boniface fly, both Bartholomew and the fat woman pounced upon him.

"You'll get it for this, Schani Huber," she screamed —"we'll see to it!"

"Damn you, shut up!" he retorted.

"Shut up!"

"Shut up!"

"Whyn't you let 'im go?" bawled Huber to Agnes. "I woulda killed 'im! See here, you, Gruber, I wanna tell you—if that dirty monkey of yours comes over again, I'll murder 'im. . . ."

"He'll murder you!"

"Oh, will 'e?" . . .

"Look out. I'm tellin' you. . . ." The hunchback gave Agnes an ominous signal with his hand. He loved her. He had often told her so; but without some means, he knew—crippled body but decent soul that he was,—that he had no chance on the Prater with Agnes. Even an urchin can choose and reject—it is the law of marriage. . . . He gambled and staked all he could scrape from his wages at Rossreiter's on his weekly

shots. He lost, but staked again. Some day he would win, and with money—Agnes. . . . The lottery is a government institution . . . eminently fair. . . .

IX

THE LIGHT GOES OUT

Two days later Agnes stood at the grind-organ. It was a damp, overcast day, but shortly cleared off, leaving a warm, oppressive night very much ahead of the season. It seemed almost like July. It was near the beginning of May.

Up in the room of the Urbans, squalid, ill-furnished, on the mattress in the brightest corner, which was dim, Ursula Urban was lying, her eyes closed, her lips feebly compressed. . . . Falling night blanketed out mercifully the poor table, two chairs, a camel-back trunk and ragged carpet bag. . . . Smoke was filling the room from a little stove on which some porridge was cooking . . . the window was slightly open, the smoke was curling out. The single blanket covering the invalid had turned a colour, neither gray nor blue, but a mixture of both, that made it look faded like the mother, thin, battered by ill, hard usage and much adversity. . . .

"Sylvester . . ." said the invalid. There was nobody in the room. "Sylvester . . ." a trifle louder . . . but her voice broke, she started to cough and coughed a full moment without stopping—the rasping, hollow sound made by broken chests and lungs eaten by a progressive germ to skeleton, cavity-walled thinness. . . The X-ray of a physician shows only red, striped fibres holding together through adhesive endurance, ready to decay, and barely able to contain sufficient of the air drawn in by the sufferer to give him or her life and circulate the blood. . . .

Presently the door opened and Sylvester came in.

"I have been calling you. . . ."

He dropped to his knees beside the mattress.

"What is it?"

"I have been calling—" she spoke so faintly, he put his ear close to her lips and the weak, hot breath issued on to his cheek. "I have been calling—I dreamed . . . Sylvester, listen . . . it won't be long, I'll be gone. . . . I know, tomorrow, today—maybe——" A spasm came over his face. . . . "No, no," she said this more briskly, "don't worry, only listen . . . it —it doesn't matter, only—I don't want to worry you, I had a dream. I saw Boniface—the little monkey,— it was such a peculiar dream . . . he was big, like a giant, and so strong, and he was running after Aggie, he caught her and then he commenced to squeeze her. . . . I think maybe he's going to kill her . . . look out!" . . .

Sylvester forced himself to smile, he pressed her hand and reassured her like a child—

"Don't think such foolish things, mother; Boniface is a little fellow and perfectly harmless. If anything, he would play with her . . . but hurt her—never."

"But he had hair on his arms . . ."

"He has—but that's nothing. All monkeys have hair."

"Thin hair?"

"Not exactly thin. They have to keep warm. Are you warm? . . . very comfortable? Don't take it to heart, such things don't happen. . . ."

He rose from the floor and looked after the porridge.

"But the dream was so real!"

"What happened—did he get her? He was grinding the organ for her two nights back. She told you that—maybe it's the reason you dreamed about him. . . ."

". . . . It made me wake up. . . . I was all

wet and frightened; my heart was beating like I was smothering. . . ."

"Don't talk at all; lay still."

He went to a wooden box standing on end by the window and divided into little compartments by boards nailed in at an amateur's angle. The shelves were crooked, and held paper bags and one or two plates with the food on top covered up. A bag of dried plums stood among these. Sylvester took it out, put his hand inside, and commenced to eat the plums, gazing fixedly at his wife. The bitterness that lay in his eyes, smouldering, was like the drab blanket covering her wasted limbs. He tried to smile, swallowing hard, so that each effort was sent down with saliva from his mouth, but the pieces felt like lumps in his throat and his lips became dry and stiff and immovable like a man frightened by his first sight of a scaffold or waiting to go to sea in a little boat on tall, choppy waves. . . .

"Sylvester . . . do you remember," recommenced the invalid, "like this, on a warm night . . . you, I . . . we left Prague? You gave up your university for me. Ain't it a shame you didn't finish? . . . "

"No," he said with a grimace, "it was the best thing I ever did!"

"To—to come to this?"

"What of it? It's my fault, though . . . you see, I never was any good. . . ."

"You are all good. And Aggie—she takes after you. . . . Sylvester—promise me—"

"—when you are gone. . . . Come, don't talk that way. Always it's the same story when people are lying in bed, they commence, 'When I am gone—' You are not going to go. Be cheerful, we have so much to live for . . . this—this is nothing. . . ."

"No, you are right . . . it's nothing. Only life

counts—and death. I am not afraid—no, but I want you to promise—"

"What are you afraid of? that I won't look after my own child? You know me better, mother. . . ." He dropped again to his knees beside her pillow, the light was so dim in the room he could not make out her features. . . . "Agnes and I are always together. She's grown up and quite a lady . . . you don't realise this, that she's no more a child . . . that she has good sense, and some day she'll marry."

"Yes, yes, that's it!" Ursula struggled with the excitement of the thought to raise herself,—"she—she—it's because she's grown . . ." And here a fit of coughing overcame her, she fell back choking with the convulsive spasms of her illness,—"Oooh God, if I could only—only—" What more she had to say was not revealed . . . she coughed for so long a time, she seemed so feeble, Sylvester became distracted; he tried to hold her up to stop the rattling, he let her sink and felt her pulse . . . it was almost gone. He became panic-stricken, but she rallied and came back to him. . . .

When he finally stood up from his knees he was as exhausted as a man who had run ten miles. The floor was spinning like a circle of purple . . . blue shadows and red spots danced before his eyes. He put his hand to his head, slowly recovered, and looked down at his wife . . . the thought was with him: "It is all over; no, she will recover! . . . or, or—is there a God? . . . can it be possible—He—He could do such things? . . ."

The presentment remained with him when he went downstairs and back into the theatre of the marionettes a half hour later: "She will die . . . there is no hope. Ursula is a dead woman. Even if the doctor comes tonight, as he promised, it is all over . . .

only God can save her, and when there is a miracle it comes to the rich."

But he went to the fat woman a little later as she stood on the platform before the concession, exhibiting herself: "Only come upstairs, Mrs. Rossreiter, do, and see how weak she is," he beseeched. "I know it will not be long . . . come quick!"

"Poor fellow . . . I know. . . ."

"Come upstairs!"

"Gladly. . . ."

She left the platform and followed him up the wooden stairway leading to the floor opposite Huber's, below which Agnes stood, eternally boxing pasteboard slips, turning a grind-organ that brought out old tunes and new, sounding alike.

She could not leave and go upstairs. Huber did not allow it. As the crowds were beginning to come past *Venedig in Wien*[1] and the Gasthaus Garten, the shooting gallery, fire department, business would soon pick up on the merry-go-round . . . it was early in the evening. But Mrs. Rossreiter had only a moment to spare . . . she tip-toed into the room above and to the side of the invalid to see if she were awake. Ursula's glazing eyes were turned to the black square of the solitary window, overlooking the Prater park as silent, as immobile as death itself. . . .

"God help us," murmured the comedienne under her breath,—"she is dying. . . ."

Tears flew out of Sylvester's eyes, his shoulders commenced to heave, and he lost all sense of motion. . . . The fat woman clutched him by the sleeve—

"Sylvester, go get the doctor . . . get Aggie or it will be too late!"

The head on the pillow, looking so frigid and without animation, moved slowly . . . the lips formed

[1]Venice in Vienna, a pleasure square by itself near the entrance.

something. Sylvester listened: "I think," said the invalid, "it will be all right for a little while . . . then —get me Aggie . . . not the doctor . . . what use . . ."

"What does she say?"

He was sobbing.

"She wants Aggie?"

He nodded his head, mutely.

"All right . . . I go . . . say, if that skunk don't let the child come up here, well, I will see—I will see—"

But Huber was firm. If Ursula were not already dying or nearly so, what difference did it make? . . . another minute and another. . . .

"You stay here!" he shouted, "nothin' doin' or out you go—you lose your job . . . t' hell with the fat woman! She's a troublemaker, she only wants t' break up my show! It don't go—y' hear me?—not with this crowd comin' in. It's a big, warm evenin' and they wants plenty of tune—swing 'er 'round, grind and shut up. . . . I'll take the tickets." He went off muttering—"The dam' rotten wench, the dam' rotten wench. . . ."

"Aggie, you better go," shouted Mrs. Rossreiter from her neighboring booth.

"You stay!" he bellowed back.

"Her mother's dyin'!" . . .

"Serves 'er right. Shut up, you dam' idiot . . . wanna get the whole crowd scared off! See here, Agnes, it's a false alarm . . . don't you go to gettin' all tore up . . . if it comes to the real thing, I'm your friend . . . stay on and dry them tears. . . ."

They were falling—into the grind-organ, onto the hand that turned the handle . . . from her eyes, her nose, she made no effort to wipe them.

All around was laughter—the hearty chatter of the

pleasure seekers, the barkers acting and dancing between their spiels, the bells and horns tinkling and blowing, the music resounding. . . . The trolley coming into its station disgorged hundreds . . . the bus line emptied tens—dozens into the Wurstelprater. The evening continued so warm it reminded them of mid-summer . . . it was overcast, and the humid atmosphere became stifling. . . .

Without the lights a dark, complete oblivion would have fallen upon the park; without a star visible in the sky this threatening warmth became the thunder weather of July . . . all felt it at once, and they started to tremble, looking about as a frightened audience does in a theatre, for exits, for shelter in the park, for some comforting assurance in the sudden moist swelter.

When the first rumble came they started to melt into the booths, under canvas . . . the lightning fled upon them, flashes lit the sky, and all at once, with the ferocity of tropical storms, it broke—the clouds parted and dropped a deluge of waters in the Wurstelprater!

Only four minutes passed. All was deserted! Barkers, pleasure-seekers, acrobats, beggars disappeared as if the hand of time had wiped them off! Only the giant ferris-wheel kept turning in the midnight of waters, and the circle-swing which could not yet come to such an abrupt halt. . . .

Agnes, without a thought of Providence, but gathering her skirt around her, ran for the stairs leading to Ursula's room . . . she was breathless before the sixth step, her feet became leaden. She could hardly drag them over the wooden surfaces, and her tears, which were so heightened by Huber's cruelty, now fastened to her lids and left her dry-eyed. . . . In great crises she could not cry.

When she entered the room Sylvester was still on

his knees, the invalid breathing her last . . . she dropped down beside him, and laid her head on her mother's bosom. . . .

Downstairs, in the deserted Prater, a solitary dog, dripping wet, sat whining out into the night. . . .

X

MADAME ELVIRA

The Emperor Franz-Josef held his regular audiences in the Hofburg once a week. . . . Two guards stood at the entrance of his study, one on either side of the door. Austria guarded the left hand side, Hungary the right. Guards relieved them at intervals, being brought by two others on each side, who retired.

In the audience hall stood a wing-adjutant whose business it was to follow the programme of his imperial and royal master, usher in the deputations, wait on the exit, and bring in burghers, counts, foreign ministers. . . . Nobody was denied an audience with Emperor Franz-Josef.

Franzl, whose duty took him to the palace mornings, followed this with driving in the afternoon and deviltry at night—when no court etiquette took him to balls, or an engagement with his future fiancée kept him from the usual round of gaieties.

Having been in the Prater two nights before, he recalled, ere he left there, promising to be at Elvira's for the bathing party two nights afterward. This was the night. . . .

He had scarcely made up his mind to go when Rudi, coming in to take his place in the audience hall as *Flügeladjutant,* caught his ear in passing by—

"It will be all right . . . Elvira has arranged everything. We shall have Fanny and Mitzerl, Lola, Dita, madame herself, and, of course, Gretel. The war minister will be there, you, I, Nicki, Eitel . . . it is a closed affair. . . ."

"Very closed," Franzl murmured sarcastically. He was getting a trifle bored with these affairs. Elvira

was a woman with shady antecedents. . . . Lola? Dita? Two of her especial charges, or, in other words, adopted daughters, little comrades, tricksters, playfellows. . . . She knew how to prepare a banquet and to provide the guests. . . .

Elvira came from the Yamskaya Sloboda. Franzl, who knew her intimately and all her ways of living, past and present, could have been more explicit than he was on the evening in the Ringstrasse Café. . . . He could have said:

"She was born in Riga, where the sailors come in to the port of Russia, and her mother gave her away at an early age to an old miser of a man who married her but did not provide properly, so she ran away and eloped with a sailor. When the sailor left her, she was poor, thrown on the world, sixteen years of age, and had never had a day of schooling. . . . So she went through some drudgery—what, nobody knew, resolved to get up higher in the world, and, with the brazenness which only ignorance can give to anybody, applied as a lady's maid to a woman of fashion, and obtained the post. . . .

"Seeing now what the 'other half' did: petty love affairs, little connivings with tutors and secretaries, meetings and drives in the park that were not altogether in the open . . . she learned quickly, and became, of course, very reckless. . . .

"The lady travelled all over Russia. Elvira, who spoke German from her acquaintance in Riga, where much is spoken, and who understood a little French with which to make an appearance, went all over with her, from St. Petersburg to Odessa, and back and forth and up and down. . . . But, plot as she would to ascend the social scale . . . plan as she did . . . the environment got the best of her. . . . The secretary of the fashionable lady made love to her . . .

was discovered by his mistress, who discharged both him and her. . . .

"She was in K—— . . . she struggled to make a living, circumstances were against her, she descended rather than ascended the social scale, and fell into the Yamkas. . . . This district has been known for its elastic character. It was not long before she was associated with houses of all-sorts-of-repute. She learned the business, came to Vienna, prospered. . . . Then one by one the fashionables came to know of her establishment. Her lists read like those of a social roster, both the gentlemen and the ladies. . . . Her adoptions were many . . . she had several blond and several brunette 'daughters' at the same time, and was good company, and was always to be relied upon to offer a new spree catering to the whims of her 'friends' —like now!"

In the home of this Elvira—fashionably furnished, well provided with servants, kept up in livery, presenting a very respectable exterior,—the four young men and the older gathered on the stroke of nine. . . . It was a familiar ground. The war minister knew it. Von Steinbrueck had a very good understanding with Madame Elvira. . . . Rudi and Nicki knew it, they often entertained their friends here. The Count von Hohenegg was perfectly at home. He could call any of the ladies on the list by the first name. Thus the party was close. Prince Eitel Hochmut had perhaps been here the fewest times of any—three or four. . . .

Elvira commenced the evening by serving a course of buttered snails . . . then she brought in fowl, truffles, white wines, heavy wines . . . salad followed . . . further wine, conserves, sherbets, roasts. . . . Endlessly the dinner, until twelve o'clock, lasted in the dinner-hall. . . . She allowed her guests to come and go as they pleased, always remaining *inside* the house. They drank sitting, standing . . .

they stood on their heads or their feet. Such is license when an evening is spent under unlicensed circumstances. . . .

Rudi got fearfully drunk, and refused to do anything but play melancholy airs on the piano, to which the hired musicians objected. Eitel sat as close as bulk permitted beside the pretty "daughter" called Dita and stuffed olives into her mouth. Nicki gave his friend Fanny her choice of his ring or his cuff-link, jeweled. She took both!

Franzl watched the war minister, the father of his Gisella, and thought what a rogue he was, for he paid, in the long run, for everything. And when Gretel, who sat next to him, filled her mouth with tobacco smoke and begged him for a kiss, he kissed her at table, as was allowable under the conditions, and found that he had inhaled her entire breath. . . .

So with one amusement after the other the hands of the clock went around.

It was time for the bathing party.

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" cried Mitzerl, jumping upon the table: "Now we shall see—"

"——what we shall see," finished Prince Eitel humourously. "How do you know? Maybe our little Gretel will drown." . . .

"Not in a loving-cup, pooh!"

"Have you seen the cup?"

"No, how is it?"

"Big enough to drown two little Mitzerls!" exclaimed the prince. "It comes upon me just this way—we are drunk and don't know anything. It might be well to have a man from the fire department to pull her out by the feet!"

"Nonsense, who is drunk?" said Nicki. "Steinbrueck hasn't kissed me, and the ladies are well off. They haven't even got sleepy, or did I hear anyone say so while I was not listening? . . ."

"Come, don't be fresh, Nicki," Mitzerl cried, "you know where you are!"

"I'm at home!"

"We're at home—we're all at home at Elvira's," sang Rudi, catching the phrase and singing it in a most dreary manner to melancholy music. . . .

"I have all the ingredients, and now, count, if you are willing, we will mix the loving-cup," Madame Elvira said to Franzl, motioning all to be seated around the table. "We all know, my friends, what a very good mixer the count is!"

The girls shrieked with laughter.

"Come, Gretel, we are going out to see if the punch-bowl fits you."

"By all means, by all means!" . . .

Everybody started clapping their hands and dinned them out of the room. Elvira returned before the table was entirely cleared and went up to the war minister:

"My dear Conrad, my butler announced there was a man here to see you. I went, to save you the annoyance. . . . It was von Harlow, he came from T——. I think the German foreign minister wants to have a meeting with you yet tonight. It will be after two—at his house. You can drive from here . . . the man speaks so abominably through his nose I can never understand him. . . ."

"My darling," he drew her dark head down on a level with his own,—"you are a marvel! Without you—well, you are so capable. . . . Come, nobody objects,"—he pressed his lips to hers. Arching and full, they were rouged to perfection. . . . "I have only one thing to thank the *lieber Gott* for: he has given to me—you!"

"But—you will not forget?" . . .

"What is that? to see T——? Do not bother me with trifles. This is evening, not morning . . . at two it will be day!" . . .

". . . Von Harlow says—"

"Nefer mind . . . I will not hear it. . . ." He stopped her mouth with another kiss, this time inserting his tongue. . . . He put his arms around her and drew her half on his knees. . . . "Tiddle-um, tiddle-up, tiddle-e-e-ee!" he commenced to tap with his foot. She was a voluptuous woman, gowned in black which outlined her figure closely and exposed her neck and arms to a great degree; and after he amused himself this way for some time, he released her, kissing the mole in her back with a vigorous smack—and her servants brought the punch-bowl in. . . .

It was an enormous bowl, at least four feet in diameter, perfectly rounded, and four feet high . . . they carried it braced on their shoulders, three of them, and as it was crystal, covered with masses of orange and acacia blossoms trailing all over the outside, nobody could have looked into the interior. . . It was placed on the table . . . a heavily chiselled ladle hung over the rim. . . .

"How are you going to fill it?" shrieked Mitzerl.

"Leth's not worry about that," Fanny rejoined. "Ith's for Franzl to fret—he promithed to fill it with thampagne. . . ."

Madame Elvira merely smiled. Her butler was instructed—he knew how the bowl would be filled.

In succession he brought the ingredients of a punch: sliced pineapples, mint, strawberries, oranges and lemons, a bottle of Absinthe, twelve magnums of *Röderer demi sec* and six bowls of Burgundy. . . .

A wild cheer broke out.

"Franzl, you fill it! . . . ooh, it'll run over . . . what an idea! He can't reach the edge, it is over his head . . . well, lift the bottles up! Hurrah! we'll all help . . . no, let him alone. . . ."

But the butler did the actual drawing of corks. Franzl lifted and filled in the bottles one by one, after

the sliced oranges and strawberries had gone in . . . then the pineapples . . . the Burgundy . . . the Absinthe. . . .

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! Ladle it around!" . . .

He lifted his arm to do so, but there was a sudden splash! . . . the wine came over the edges and deluged the table-cloth. . . . A hand and an arm appeared and raised to a shoulder, whereupon the head followed, and the neck,—there was Gretel! She had, apparently, nothing on inside the punch-bowl, her hair was streaming, and she shrieked and laughed so that the wine kept bubbling and the company was inflamed to the highest pitch!.....

"She's in! she's in! What have you got on? Are you naked, Gretel? . . . give us a soup-ladle of that wine! . . . ."

Cries... laughter... the mounting hysteria of an orgy.....

Prince Eitel Hochmut alone kept his head because he was so debauched that to lose it to him seemed childish....

"Na-so," he said, withdrawing from the roof of his mouth a tongue sweating under the pressure of a full glass of punch,—"this is as it should be, but a virgin gives a sweeter flavour.... I know, I have tasted both. . . Well, listen now, I want to see what I am drinking!" . . .

This precipitated an immediate riot to get up on the table-top. . . all the women were unchivalrously pushed down and all the men clambered up. In the scuffle, six lit candles, standing to give them a certain light effect, were thrown down, and the room was plunged in darkness! . . .

XI

HUBER COLLECTS HIS GREATEST CROWD

Candles, burning at the head and feet of the corpse, were extinguished. Nothing except daylight, penetrating the meagre window and dropping upon the camel-back trunk, the ragged carpet-bag, the table, three chairs, soap-box on end,—gave any outline to the room of Ursula Urban. . . . The body was gone. The mattress still lay, sunk in the middle, tossed with signs of perspiration not too pleasant, and the recollection of a live thing lying there that was, and the empty vacuum of the dead. . . .

Sylvester sat by the table. He had just come in. The funeral was over. He had the funeral bill to consider, and the doctor's fees, which were small, but to him quite a mountain.

Agnes was down below. She came also from the cemetery, her eyes yet red, her mouth contracted with the dizziness and pain following the morbid horror of death and the last solemn rites. . . . It was morning, she had duties. . . . One of these was to clean the place where pleasure stalked by the sunlight of afternoon and artificial lamplight of night, where people came to laugh and sing, and forget all about the sterner realities of life, such as this thing that had just happened — that was happening in all parts of the world every hour of the twenty-four. . . .

Agnes swept the platform of the merry-go-round with a large broom, twice too heavy for her usual fragile frame, and now like a burden. Between the crannies was dust, and the horses' manes and tails needed combing . . . the carriages held papers and fruit-peels scattered about, and cake-crumbs and sticky

candy were on the floor. The morning being without performance, the canvas flap was still down in front, cutting off the street—a protection against the weather and beggars or stray children who were inclined to hop about like sparrows on the motionless *Karrusell*, from elephants' backs to gondolas and off and on as if they were leaping from a street-car platform in motion—a fascinating game.

At this hour all the inhabitants of the Wurstelprater—performers, spielers, the giant, the dwarfs, acrobats, employés—ate at the coffee counters, sitting up and ordering *Wienerwurst,* smoking pipes stolidly before the concessions, mingling, swapping stories, running about in dirty kitchen aprons or in less than this, merely with coats over . . . They were a motley, strange assemblage, like a menagerie, having tigerish dispositions and the simplicity of little cubs . . . and then an occasional high-voiced lady like a parrot calling to another with children hiding under her apron like a brood of chicks.

But behind the flap of canvas Agnes was quite alone, sweeping, cleaning, dusting, thinking always that she was quite alone except for Sylvester who sat upstairs with a little cigar-box before him containing a few coins, all that they had, and the undertaker's bill, third class, seventy-five crowns, and the twelve visits of the doctor, twenty-four crowns, damning him. . . . He was a conscientious man, stroking his forehead, childishly wrestling with a problem that had no solution. . . .

She set her broom against the door and turned to go into the ticket-booth and fish out the remnants of the ticket stubs blown in there and wrappers from new rolls. All at once the broom fell down! She turned and saw Huber coming into the merry-go-round, a cigarette in his mouth, unlighted, and the look on his face of a man who is glad to see—a woman, someone he has been waiting for. . . . There was a diabolical

cast to his eye and a twitching of his beard that was not usual with Schani Huber. . .

She saw him light his cigarette, nonchalantly, the hand went up and took the little flame to the weed. He towered above her when they stood alongside; his great frame filled the doorway.

"Since when you been back?" he said insolently, "I was waitin' for you . . . " and he started to walk toward her.

Agnes did not wait, but started also—walking around him, trying to get past to the door. Fear was in her heart, a nauseating feeling that she could not reach it . . . weakness in her legs from what she had been through in the morning and this combined.

"Nothin' doin'," he said briefly, blocking her way.

"Let me get out."

"Nothin' doin' . . . I got something t' say t' you . . . "

She tried to dart past him, ducking under his arm . . . he caught her by the shoulder—

"Wait, I say! Dammit, can't you be decent . . . listen here, Agnes, we played this game too long . . . you know what I want . . . I been stuck on you for a long time, but it's got past words. . . . There's a lotta dames would run a hundred miles t' be my sweetheart. . . . "

"Then why pick on me?" she stuttered; "ain't you m-married?"

"Married—hell! that don't bother me . . . it's you I'm wantin'!"

She started in to struggle, jerking and twisting herself to get out of his grasp.

"You little devil . . . you wanna wrassel—I'll give you somethin' . . . I'll make y' mouth burn!"

He bent over her, crushing her in the power of one hand around the waist so every bit of breath was taken out of her, she was nauseated and fainting. . . . He

let her go just as suddenly and she fell over backwards, stumbling so he had to catch her . . . and again he started to kiss her with a smacking of wet lips like a savage dog over the carcass of a sheep in the mountains. It was interminable—this kissing, and the door stood open behind them . . . locked like one figure, they presented the apparition of a new monstrosity on the Prater.

Mrs. Huber found them this way, coming down her stairs, into the open door, where she stood, stupefied, unable to advance or fall back,—breathing as if she were about to burst, frightened, dumbfounded, made ill all at once!

Huber, springing back, gave her no time to recover. He was caught, red-handed, like a sheep-killer, but he was cruel and he could laugh. Nobody ran his life, only he . . . nobody could take his sweets from him.

He flung himself at the door and he gave her a blow with it that sent her reeling backward—

"Get out, damn your hide! get out and stay out!" . . .

The door slammed. He locked it.

"Now, my babee, we only jus' commenced . . . I'm gonna have what I want an' I'm gonna have it now!"

He made a leap, but the girl had recovered and was too swift for him. She ran. He followed. Around and around the merry-go-round they flew. . . . She commenced to scream and sent out piercing cries from the canvas tent that were heard upstairs where Sylvester sat over the undertaker's bill,—that were heard all over the Prater. . . . He came tumbling down. The back door was locked. Mrs. Huber was gone. The front flap was open. He ran around to the front . . . but he couldn't get the front open either!

In his head—right out of the subconscious shot the thought—"The hairy monkey . . . as big as a man, not too hairy!" . . . Ursula's dream! He com-

menced to open his pocket-knife, cutting the flap, trembling like a man with the vertigo. . . .

. . . And from every corner of the Volksprater came the people, running, shouting . . . Bartholomew, Aurora Rossreiter, Boniface hopping after . . . Astarte, Astarte's barker . . . the lemonade woman and her son, the deep-sea diver, his wife . . . acrobats, pianists, the gypsies . . . employés of the street and its booths and the street-car men, coffee-house proprietors, waiters, head-waiters, street-sweepers, dancers, dwarfs . . . the children of all the performers, their dogs, cats, little beggars and big beggars, and the women who played as animated dolls, the men from the *Panoptikem* . . . Daphne, Fortuna and Flora . . . the woman without lower body, the man with six thumbs, the skeleton, the snake-charmer—like one they ran over, attracted by the cries, inhuman and piercing! . . .

Sylvester was already inside, pulling his legs through the slit which he had cut. Batholomew followed with Boniface who made little screaming noises in imitation. . . . Mrs. Rossreiter, the fat lady, was too large, and all, struck with a sudden idea as they came on the spot, commenced to rip the seams of the canvas to allow her to pass inside.

Huber by this time, with his hands on Agnes, was smothering her mouth, shouting—

"You'll pay for this, you little cheat—you'll pay, you'll pay!"

"Don't touch me!" she gasped.

"Shut up! I'll touch your dam'——"

"You beast!"

Sylvester leaped upon him from behind, bearing him down and fastening his hands on his throat. . . . Agnes went down with them but was dragged off by Bartholomew; the monkey, who imitated everything they did, squealing with excitement, jumped back and forth, back and forth. . . .

Huber was a powerful man, he could wrestle with Sylvester. But he had no pocket-knife . . . Sylvester lifted it and struck! . . .

"God dam', you son of a bitch! . . . dam' you, dam' you, dam' you!" . . .

The blood commenced to flow.

Sylvester stood speechless, looking at his knife.

"You done f' me now . . . call the police—get somebody!"

But the Prater street was already in the concession—performers, organ-grinders, acrobats, children, dogs! Everybody swarmed around, a chattering, noisy, turbulent mass of people, crying,

"It's a good thing! it's a good thing . . . he's only struck . . . not dead! Come away . . . whatta you care?—it's Huber . . . he's got what's comin' . . . "

Screams, exclamations, shouts. . . .

The police came, following the crowds, separated them and stepped in between—

"Who did this? what's the matter here? who stabbed this man?"

"He done it," said Huber, designating Sylvester, "the dirty cuss!"

"You ain't dead." . . .

"He done f' me!"

"No, it's only a flesh wound, in the shoulder . . . come here, give me a handkerchief . . . " one of the police officers bound him up. The other said to Sylvester with arrogance, which is common among those with a uniform on their backs who are among plain citizens,—

"Well, what have you got to say about this, *Pojaz?*[1] . . . "

"I," said Sylvester, "I was sitting upstairs——"

"Yes, we'll leave that to the judge . . . I don't let anybody tell me anything; first, come to headquarters

[1]clown, performer.

and see the magistrate . . . we'll leave it to him. You preferring a charge?" . . .

"Sure, I'm preferrin' a charge—he struck me!" shouted Huber.

Sylvester, still stupefied by the suddenness of circumstances, began—"See, Mr. Policeman, he was—he was assaulting my daughter——"

"That is as it is . . . is that the knife?"

The two officers took him in charge . . . he gave up the little knife, bloody, an inch or two of pointed steel that was the cause of all this commotion.

But it was Agnes who commenced to shake, sobbing on Bartholomew's arm, "They're goin' to take him. He didn't do it—he done nothin'—I did!"

"What is that?" said the officer.

"Sure! she done as much as he!" Huber shouted loudly: "take 'er along, she 's a vagrant anyhow—I'm through with 'er . . . she goes out in the street."

"Don't you lissun to that liar. She ain't no vagrant," interposed the fat woman . . . "she works for me from now on . . . and when her father comes back he works for me again, any time. . . . Don't you worry, honey," she soothed and patted her—"it's all right with me——"

"But they're takin' my father," screamed Agnes,—"don't you see, Mrs. Rossreiter,—oh my God, they're takin' him to jail!" . . .

XII

TWO MONTHS LATER

Sylvester was still in jail. Summer had come, the chestnuts were in full leaf, birds sang . . . It was June.

On the 26th, Agnes, determined to see her father, started off from the Wurstelprater. She had gone to the city jail before but had never been allowed to see him. Justice is slow. The preliminary examination took place but the transfer had not yet been made. . . .

Before the stone prison people came and went. The patrol wagon was driven in, they stopped and looked at the prisoners being brought for minor offenses and fratricide and infanticide . . . crime is always a thing that interests and criminals stir up more concern than the passage of a war minister or a foreign attaché. . . .

Agnes, leaving the Prater bus, came to the city prison. She had a shaking, always accompanied by tears, when she came here. Her father was inside—her best-beloved. Her mother was in the ground. Life was hollow—there was nobody but Mrs. Rossreiter, the woman who was a second mother to her now. Bartholomew, the hunchback, loved her too, but it was a different kind of love. He was good. He gave her candy, squeezed her hand. She loved him—for what he was, a good, kind fellow, and his little monkey, Boniface, who hated Huber, who was her enemy. . . .

The patrol-wagon was empty; it should have driven away. Instead, the prison doors opened and two officers came out with a criminal between them. Who was this "criminal"? Sylvester!

Agnes gave a great cry and launched herself into his arms!

"They are letting you go? you are free?" . . .

He tenderly stroked her hair—

"Not yet. It is only the preliminary examination. I am being transferred . . . "

"Where?"

"To the county jail."

"Ooh, they are taking you still further?"

"Don't cry. Only—how are you? See, we will soon have a crowd of people here. My little girl looks well," said Sylvester.

"But you, papa, you look pale. What have they done to you?" she moaned. . . .

"Come, come," said the police-officer.

She buried her face in her father's shoulder—

"Come home to me soon! Ooh, you don't know—can't think—how lonesome it is, papa,—you here . . . mamma gone . . . I lay awake every night—I can't sleep. How can I get you out of here? . . . "

"I don't know, my darling, good-bye . . . "

He kissed her again, she clung to him—"Don't go, papa, don't go! . . . "

But Sylvester had to go, and inside the patrol wagon with its grating in the rear, he leaned his face against the cold bars and gazed out at her with hopeless, yet resigned and wordless, sorrow. . . .

She stood undecided. She felt crushed.

Only one place there is where people go who have overwhelming miseries on their shoulders. This is to the Stephansdom which stands on the Stephansplatz practically in the center of Vienna proper—the great church with its Catholic spires and crosses, its enormous nave, high altar, communion service and confessional.

Agnes found her footsteps leading her to Stephansdom.

Inside was a quiet and reigning peace. If people came in and went out—which they did all day long,

you were not aware of them. They never stepped in each other's way. The church is large, the people are considerate. . . . The priests, passing back and forth, have a comforting look, and the incense, which is part and pertinent to all churches and belongs with the painted saints and lead-glass windows,—soothes the nerves and makes a godly rite of a human one.

Agnes knelt and she gave up to the church all the inmost thoughts of her heart. She prayed for her mother. She prayed for her father. She thought of praying for Huber as a good Christian, but the thought was repellant to her. . . . He could find his own sanctuary, his own god in his own way. She could not shrive his soul and she would not call even the good Lord-God's attention to it and thereby bring him nearer to salvation.

She rose from her knees and went out feeling warmer and comforted, stopping at the font to cross herself with holy water. The day was yet splendid and the sun high without; and, standing before Stephansdom, she saw an elegant carriage with liveried footman and coachman, drive to a standstill before the church. The servants wore light riding-boots with dark tops, gray coats and cockaded hats. The carriage wore a crest on the lap-robe which covered a beautiful woman. . . .

Agnes saw the woman, but the woman did not see her. If she had, it would have made no difference. Such a stylish and aristocratic person does not notice the poor and the shabbily dressed coming in or going out of places. There are too many of them and they count too little in the autocratic life of Vienna. . . .

The Stephansplatz throbbed with life. Other carriages and delivery carts, shoppers, business men, sensation-hunters, crossed and criss-crossed the square. . . . The imperial and royal court supplier of robes—N. Sitich—was here . . . Jacob Rothberger, a familiar

name, across from him; Mandelbaum and Rosenstein, the imperial and royal court suppliers of neckties, next to him. . . .

Coming out of Mandelbaum and Rosenstein was a tall young man who wore very well-fitting and high-class clothes for a civilian and had a military walk so far as Austrians ever walked militarily. The walk was a slight slouch; it had none of the Prussian swagger; it was the exact duplicate of Emperor Franz-Josef's walk, which all his officers imitated involuntarily. . . . . And all in all, the young man proceeded rather rapidly and was about to diagonal the street when Agnes perceived him from the Stephansdom and let out a little cry! She recognized Mr. Franz Meier. . . .

She ran up to him at once.

Franzl stopped and regarded her strangely. . . .

"Isn't this—" she commenced timidly.

He looked into her face—

"Why yes . . . how are you?"

Franzl was good-natured and he forgot for the moment that they were not in the Prater. He placed her—she was the good-looking girl in the *Ringelspiel* . . . Her colour was heightened—she had roses in her cheeks and the poor black cape and vile-fitting shoes, dress and mittens of the girl could not hide the fact that she was pretty.

"Hello there . . . what are you doing here? Let's get out of the street where we don't get run over and talk on the sidewalk. . . . " He led her by the arm to the sidewalk. "Shall we walk here?"

"Where were you—ooh, I know: you were just coming out of the necktie store!" said Agnes.

"Yes, did you see me?"

"No, but I know you work there."

This information caught Franzl for a moment off guard. He was buying a line of new ties, true, but he didn't remember—oh yes! by jove!

"Sure," he said, "sure. I forgot . . . I mean, I forgot that you knew it. . . . Yes, I work there, but I have an hour or two off."

"Is it lunchtime?"

"Are you hungry?"

"No, I used to eat," she said wistfully, "but the feeling's wore off. . . . My mother's dead."

"Oh, did she die?" sympathized Franzl.

"Yes, my father's in jail too."

He stopped still—

"What do you mean—your father's in jail?"

"He is. They took him. I haven't been able to do nothin' for him. I'm pretty near desp'rate," and she commenced to sob convulsively. . . .

Franzl thought for a moment. The spectacle of himself, stylishly groomed, talking to this wisp of a sad-eyed child in the clothes of a slumswoman in the fashionable location of the Stephansplatz, was bound to attract attention. A *Fiaker* passed. He put up his hand and stopped it, and begged her—

"See, I have to go some place. Will you step in? We can talk about it inside while we're driving. . . . "

Agnes trusted him completely—"Sure," she said. They stepped in.

"Obere-Augartenstrasse," said Franzl, after a moment of hesitation. . . .

He was right.

He had been seen. And Agnes, standing so demurely and in her slumswoman's clothes before the imperial and royal business of robes, was also seen. It was the woman in the equipage in front of Stephansdom, coming out of the church after her rapid confession, that passed them, and, as she did so, said to her coachman—

"Drive slowly, turn to the left. Draw up . . . wait until the *Fiaker* passes, which is on your right, and follow it. I don't want to be seen. . . . "

XIII

A TRAGEDY IN THE DANUBE

Franzl, designating Madame Elvira's house, had an object in view. It was a similar object to many he had before: the enticement of a pretty girl from the Wurstelprater into the home of a *demimondaine* for the purpose of debauching her. . . .

They drove rapidly.

But in the *Fiaker,* as they swung into Rothenthurmstrasse and along Franz-Josef's Quai in order to cross the canal into Taborstrasse which leads into Obere-Augartenstrasse, No. 14,—she commenced to tell him about the troubles on the concession two months previously: her sorrow after her mother's death, the funeral, her taking flowers—Bartholomew's violets, she hadn't money to buy any herself,—and riding in a carriage hired by Mrs. Rossreiter behind the hearse . . . and that when she returned, and had only two hours to get the merry-go-round in shape, Huber had come in and assaulted her. . . .

Here her eyes filled with tears . . . she raised them up to him. Franzl felt very much like a man who has prepared himself for an undertaking whose nerve fails him, or, in other words, succumbs to qualms. . . .

But he sympathised. He heard her tell over again the whole struggle: her escape, her running around the booth to ward Huber off, his wife's appearance, and what that wife had thought of her. This bothered her conscience, for, no matter how many times she excused herself to Mrs. Huber and no matter how many times Mrs. Huber excused her for all the trouble,—she knew in her inmost heart there was a canker there. Mrs. Huber hated her! She had stolen her husband

. . . they got on very poorly anyway . . . were always quarreling . . . lived in a dingy flat over the concession, counting money which Marianka never spent . . . living on cheap food with poor dishes and rancid butter. . . .

These things in the greatest detail she had time to tell Franz, her friend, and he listened. Then her father was overhead and he heard her cries and came down with his pen-knife . . . he stabbed Schani Huber —not much, only in the shoulder. . . . But the police came—two big officers, walking through from *Venedig in Wien,* from the Praterstern, where they generally stood and held up the traffic,—and he was taken to prison. . . . She had been there to visit him. They were taking him to the county jail today. . . .

Clap—clap—clap!

The horse's hoofs clattered over the Franz-Josef's Quai to the Ferdinandsbrücke, where they assumed a noiseless tread on the wooden blocks covering the splendid steel structure. . . .

Behind came another carriage. It was the livery. All of a block intervened.

"Drive far back, I don't want to be seen," said the lady. Her coachman responded by drawing up the horses.

As he did so a singular thing happened.

The *Fiaker* had gotten ahead now. The street beyond and before was quiet, and on the bridge stood a woman with a little boy of six and a baby. . . . She held the baby. She looked into the Danube Canal, which is also known as the Danube Channel, an offshoot or branch of the main current of the River Danube about two miles distant. . . . Her clothes were rusty—black and brown turned green and gray, torn, badly worn. . . . Yes, just like a crow she stood there, motionless, her head wrapped in a shawl so even here she was unrecognizable,—like the birds circling over-

head, two—throwing their shadows for some purpose on the Ferdinandsbrücke, outlined by the sun. . . .

And watching them, she suddenly took her shawl from her head and wrapped it about the body of the boy . . . then clutched the bundle to her that was a child in arms and leaped into the channel!

As there was a railing she first had to get through. This she accomplished, difficult as it seemed, without hesitance, wriggling through like a lizard, and hung for just a moment before she was off.

There was a loud splash.

The coachman of the carriage, seeing this leap, drew up his horses and stopped directly above her as he was about to clatter by. . . .

"My God, my lady," he exclaimed, affrighted,—"a woman has just jumped into the water!" . . .

The woman in the equipage turned pale.

The footman, sitting on the box, leaned over at once, looking into the stream—

"I will go after her," he said: "she is struggling . . . wait . . . call somebody . . . "

He was about to swing himself down.

"Drive on," said the woman in the carriage, "do you want me to be sick? Drive, drive. . . ."

The coachman looked at the footman, who was taken aback—

"But the woman is dr——"

"Drive on!" . . .

The *Fiaker* was now two blocks or more ahead. The outline was nearly lost. The coachman, trembling from his emotion and indecision, for he was seeing a human being die and was not going to assist her!—whipped up his horses, instead, to overtake the *Fiaker* and clattered over the asphalt street, covering a block and half of another. . . .

"Now don't get too close!" cried the lady, her tones impassioned and not shaken in the least, "keep a half-

block to the rear. This must not be lost sight of. . . . And if you cannot manage, then give the reins to Rudolf. . . . "

It was only necessary to keep the vehicle in sight. Such a simple piece of instruction had never before been given to Jacob, the coachman, and yet so upset was he—so confounded by the immediate happening, he flicked the horses with his whip when he should have let them alone and dragged them to a stand when he should have let them ride, and started and stopped and shook the carriage until, if his mistress had had a weak stomach, she must surely have developed a case of nausea. But she had not.

The *Fiaker* continued until Obere-Augartenstrasse. Then Franzl signalled his driver to find No. 14. He had already made up his plan in his head; he knew what to do. Agnes had her father's trouble uppermost in mind? He took her hand on the journey and began to stroke it—he adopted a big-brother attitude—

"Now Agnes, I am, as you know, nothing but a necktie salesman. I have no influence, but I have a very good friend who is influential—I even think, as a favour to me, an extreme favour!—he will exert himself for my sake, and we will see—right now—what we can do to get your father out. . . . "

"Ooh, is that possible!" she cried joyously.

"Only trust in me."

"I do, I do!"

"Well, then,—here we are. This is the home of the commissary of police, my very best friend. We will now see if he is at home. . . . "

He started to dismount from the *Fiaker* before Elvira's house.

"Then you drove all the way over here, payin' for a carridge, jus' t' see your friend and get him t' help me? ooh!" said Agnes, awestrickenly,—"ooh!" . . .

"Indeed I did," he squeezed her hand. "Wait right

here . . . I won't be long, I just want to see if he is at home. If not, I'll make another engagement."

And so he went in and the liveried carriage, waiting a half-block down the street, had orders to observe him closely and to drive slowly past if he remained inside. The occupant wished to see exactly where this Franzl, Count von Hohenegg, had his rendezvous for the afternoon, for rendezvous it seemed to be, since there was a girl and a *Fiaker* hired for the occasion! . . . and to read the number above the door of the house.

But Franzl shortly came outside again. His face wore a simulated disappointed air. . . .

"I am sorry, very sorry, but the fact is the commissary is not there. His wife is at home, however, and she says if we will come inside and wait for a few moments, she will send a servant for her husband and we can get the matter straightened out. I'm afraid it's the best we can do," he said ruefully, "what do you say?" . . .

She answered him by springing out of the carriage!

"Then you want to go in?"

She nodded her head briskly, looking up at him with joy in her eyes. Her naïveté in face of the state of her apparel was touching. . . .

What had really happened was this:

Franzl, who always depended on Elvira, found her at home among her gaudy and costly furnishings—the prizes won through the infatuation of the war minister,—and her servants and pleasant rooms, many too many for this one woman to occupy. He immediately took her into his confidence—

"I have a little—well, a little——"

"Let us say friend. . . . "

". . . yes, friend outside, and I need your——"

"Rest easy, you can have my whole house!"

"That is true. I only need one room. But it is your coöperation I want, yourself, your help, aid,—whatever you want to call it. . . . "

"In what way?"

"The girl has been unfortunate. She had a tussle with a—a sort of ruffian—she is not a girl of easy virtue—and the fellow was—was getting the better of her, so her father pitched in and they got him after the fight and put him in jail. . . . "

"Who—the 'ruffian'?" asked Elvira sarcastically. "Why they have never harmed a one of you—Nicki, Rudi or yourself—or Eitel!"

"No, be serious . . . her father. He's in jail, we're to get him out."

"You don't need me."

"I do. I've got her sympathy." . . .

"That goes far."

"I told her I was a necktie salesman, my friend the commissary of police lives here and you are his wife. . . . "

Madame Elvira started to laugh—

"The thing is not so far-fetched. . . . "

"Well, it could be further," he admitted: "Steinbrueck's the war minister. . . . "

"And I——" she checked herself. Elvira's ambition was to marry the Count von Steinbrueck and to become the countess some day and decide fortunes of peace and war in Europe. . . . But she concluded, owing to the delicate connection between the Count von Hohenegg and the Countess Gisella, it was better to keep this matter private, so substituted: "I am only too glad to be of service. That is my business; and so, what do you want me to say to her? . . . "

"Only this: you expect your husband to be home, but not before six. Meantime you will send your servant to the Shotten-Ring, where is his office, and get him here on important business, to satisfy me. . . . Then decide to go yourself—to explain to him everything—and go or stay, but get out of the room. . . . The rest

will be up to myself. And as for her father—I'll get him out tomorrow." . . .

"And as for me: I'll come back——"

". . . in an hour!"

The arrangement perfect, Franzl skipped down the stairs. He gave his arm to Agnes, put on his most disappointed expression and started to mount the stairs with her. . . .

The carriage which was down the street approached as if by signal. The lady looking out of it watched the backs of the strangely matched couple as the door opened and they disappeared inside. . . .

"Drive home," she said to Jacob on the high box . . . and leaned back with a little smile upon her lips. . . .

XIV

JOCK THE LADY-KILLER

When the Viennese derby was run at the Freudenau in the Prater all nations sent in their mounts. If the biggest string was Viennese, owing to the proximity of events at home, a good attendance could be counted on from England and, with the horses, grooms, trainers, jockeys, stable-boys and stable-owners from the Downs and other famous courses across the channel. . . .

When the derby is run it gathers together a motley assemblage. Cavalry officers come with their highly trained mounts and their air of superiority. Austrian cavalrymen can really ride. Not so well, perhaps, as the best men of picked celebrity in Belgium—but they jump steeples seldom attempted by lay riders and perform on their dashing steeds in special and carefully conceived tricks. . . . Women of the court who have a love for horses are on the race-course. They wear habits and go out to judge purchases and take a turn about when they have chosen to add mare or stallion to their stables. . . . Some women only go to see and be seen and they, as at Longchamps, wear gowns of outre cut and design and hold gaudy parasols over their carefully coiffured heads. . . . Touts, racehorse gamblers, hangers-on, checkered-suited flashy individuals with hats rakishly askew on their heads and indexes along with their canes in their hands, are also prominent on the courses . . . talking paddock lingo, chewing on their long black cigars. . . .

At the Freudenau, Gisella, the Countess of Steinbrueck, had taken her first lesson in love. . . . She loved horses from infancy, but love of a human being—love of a man, came to her before the paddocks and

the grandstand beyond the Unterer Prater and the Krieau in Freudenau, in its appointments one of the finest courses in the whole world.

With the earl of C——'s stable, Jock the lady-killer came into Vienna. He had started as a stable-boy, risen to trainer, was now handling horses on the outside, losing as much as he made on race courses, and all in all not very prosperous, but uncouth, servile, a smart horseman and a dissolute under-hostler at one time. He never felt secure enough to be a good gambler. He never had the confidence to take risks in business, branch out, be anything . . . only he was accustomed to catering after horses and to receiving some attention from women,—because of his uneven qualities, or lack of qualities, or some secret veiling the fact that he was nothing but might be a whole lot? . . . Who can fathom the reason of some men's attractions for some women, or some women for some men? It is incongruous, it causes people to sneer, smile and shake their heads. But it takes place all the same. . . .

Gisella had just made up her mind to buy two horses from another stable when she decided to wait with her purchases until she inspected the earl of C——'s horses to see if anything better were offered. . . . The first man she saw in the paddock was Jock Steers. Jock was polishing harness, his pipe in his mouth, heavy fumes issuing out, his brow furrowed by the perpetual two lines that gave him an hostler's look, and his hands full of grease. But he removed his pipe and spat, when she looked at him, in a certain way. . . . He followed this with a look at her. It was curious, like a squint and survey at once—it made her shiver from some cause. . . .

Maybe it was this narrow inspection—intended to be stupid, but having something evil in it—that attracted her attention. . . . Gisella felt repulsed and fascinated. The man was a conundrum.

She turned to look over the horses, the groom showing her about. When she decided that nothing interested her—except this man, she asked him,

"Could you take the time to judge two horses for me in another stable? I'll pay you well for your time." . . .

He spat before he answered—"Yes, I will."

"All right. Come this way. . . "

He did not trouble himself to put on his coat. He was too stupid and lazy . . . He left the pipe behind, odorous, on a shelf in the paddock. He gave a nod with his head to another groom as he passed, merely to signify that he had an outside job on his hands. . . .

When Jock appraised the horses, the groom and the Countess Gisella met on even grounds. There is nothing that will bring a man and a woman closer . . . their social positions mean nothing, their thoughts are on the same thing . . . they judge each other in their judgment of animals, and if each measures up to the other's expectations in talking horsey, they will be on a level, intimate and unrestrained. . . .

Gisella came out of the *Coeur Sacré* originally—the convent, book learned, fluent in English as well as three other languages, and she had an interest in music. But horses were her pastime and horses she elected to think, talk, dream and eat! The stable was more a parlour to her than her drawing-room, and she would have slept there if dictation of caste had not been against it. . . . She read a great deal—books of the type of "Hands Around" by Dr. Schnitzler, and the "Decameron," which she knew by heart, and the *"Elegante Welt"*[1], which was on her boudoir table. . . .

She bought the horses—

"Now, see here, what money do you earn in England?" she asked the hostler.

He spat—

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[1]"Fashionable World," a magazine.

"Me? Ten pounds an' found. . . . "

He gave her a squinting look.

"Will you leave Lord C—— if I give you more money to work for me? You'll have charge of the horses and three other men to help you. I ride every day. . . . "

"'Is lordship 'as no strings on me. I c'n talk a little Dutch too."

"I don't care about the 'Dutch,' I want a man that can ride and groom a horse, and I think you know how. . . . "

He smiled and spat vilely—

"Wot'll y' pay?"

"I am the Countess von Steinbrueck. See your owner and tell him you are coming into my stable. Money is no object. . . . Arrange to bring these colts along, I've paid for them. The address is No. 7, Bartensteingasse. . . . "

Gisella felt a satisfaction in offering the man her livery. It was reducing him to slavery and he presented a puzzle of self-satisfaction.

Jock commenced to ride with her. A whole year passed. She was no nearer solution of both his and her problems. He was still self-satisfied, she was attracted by him and by it. . . . He seemed to be hiding some secret fountain of strength when the attitude was sheer stupidity.

At last she found that the sight of no other man was gratifying to her, Jock was fostering this. He was not so stupid but that he was evil. The regular routine with time for thought and the constant picture of the countess before him, gave him a half sign of her intentions. . . . They passed looks, talked in the stable . . . he was even good-humoured about what *was going* to happen and gave Bunny, the second groom, a wink about it when the Countess Gisella left, after pressing his hand. . . .

She commenced to make love to him . . . in the midst of an affair in her ballroom when the war minister, giving a formal function, had half the court there, she would leave—going down the back stairs—and run out to the stalls where Jock would be counting money—he got an extra good salary from his infatuated countess!—and Bunny stood in another part of the stable, the harness room, polishing her saddle; and here, sitting on a stool, lighting a cigarette for him and herself, she would take her shawl off and exhibit herself in full evening dress. . . .

She puffed quietly—in significant intimacy. . . .

Jock looked at her bare shoulders and arms. If he relished this sight, his features never moved. If she knew what his thoughts were, she enjoyed them . . . this lower-world license gave her a different feeling—more disgustingly licentious—than the gaze of officials in the ballroom. The groom commenced to have a hard time of it. From scoffs and sneers behind her back he went into a struggle, which, in the end, made a rich man of him. He began it right here . . . when his blood moved . . . in the restraint that he put on himself like a coyote being snapped at by a tigress! . . .

She took his hand and drew him close to her—

"Those abominable bores—I couldn't stand them a moment longer. I wanted to come down here, I couldn't wait . . . it 's only ten o'clock, the ball isn't half started. How I will be able to put up with it another four hours—God in Heaven, help me! Come, Jock, and give your mistress a kiss . . . if they only knew—those fools up there—how we get on down here. . . . "

She kissed him and he got up and looked out of the door; seeing nobody, he came back and sat down beside her.

"What is the matter? don't you want me to kiss you? Well, do or don't—I'm mistress here! nobody 's going

to interfere . . . are you afraid I'll lose my reputation? . . . "

She shrugged at the thought.

"Well, we godda take care. . . . "

"No, we don't. What are you looking at?"

She followed his gaze. She had lifted her cigarette to her lips . . . her hand was covered with flashing jewels. They took his eye. Greedily, in the semi-light, he saw emeralds, diamonds—

"Do you want one of those? Ssh . . . I'll give you that as a souvenir . . . don't let anyone see it, they know the Countess Gisella's jewel box pretty well." The emerald ring lay in his palm . . . before accepting it, he lifted her hand and inspected the balance of the stones insolently. . . .

"Wotcha got there? ruby, is it?"

"Ruby, yes. . . . "

The emerald was far more valuable. She closed his hand over it. . . .

"You don't wanna give me that? why—why—" he protested the gift with well-played modesty.

She assured him it was her little gift, insisted, kissed him again. . . .

"Jock—my God, they'll miss me! where is my head? I forget everything when I am in here!" . . .

And so, actually carried away by her own interest in the man who was stimulating her, vilely, unnaturally, in her lower nature,—she ran back the way she had come. . . .

Once he went so far as to embrace her, after such a scene . . . he played too well—was actually trembling with the passion she brought out in him. . . . But she raised her crop and struck him a blow in the face that paralyzed him!

"Have I hurt you? I didn't mean to hurt you. . . . "

He understood this vaguely: the old warning, I will take as I please, but you are the inferior, you will allow

me to take, but never presume! And he carried the welt with him for a week. . . .

She was falling more deeply into the cesspool . . . she was running in at all hours—when not actually on her horse—to see him, throwing over engagements, making opportunities. . . . Less and less did reputation matter. The tie with the Count von Hohenegg was becoming very irksome. . . . She sat in the straw and loved Jock, and the horses looked on, but not the other groom—since he had been given notice to vacate the stable on these occasions on penalty of losing his job; and Jock would have discharged him . . . he could now go to any lengths; Gisella was falling the victim to her own passions. . . .

On the day she decided that, if possible, she would throw over everything for his sake, only one thing stood on her conscience. . . . She was devout—in religion as in corruption; the thought that something she was planning was outside the tenets of her church, led her to St. Stephen's . . . she would go to confession and see if this weight remained on her conscience. The elopement she had no notion of giving up. But her oath to Franzl and her father—yes, decidedly, why not confess she had no interest in the man she was engaged to?

The more reckless a disposition is, the more dominated by church fears if the upbringing has been orthodox and the symbol sits over the mantelpiece, on the dressing-table, in the prayer-book on the table and rites and formulas and what not. . . .

Gisella ordered her carriage . . . it was near the end of June . . . she rode forth. . . .

And coming away from the Stephansdom, fate gave her the opportunity she was looking for—in her liveried equipage where Jacob and Rudolf wore light riding boots with dark tops, gray coats and cockaded hats. . . . Franzl, on the Stephans-

platz, with a shabby stranger, but a woman all the same!

Franzl? what was he doing with the girl, young and good-looking and shabby? . . . His taste—she laughed —went down the scale like her own.

Let 's see where they made their rendezvous?

She followed them over the Ferdinandsbrücke, where something happened—something appalling she wanted to forget! . . . the carriage swayed drunkenly and she had to admonish Jacob, actually, how to drive her . . . and the man she was engaged to went into a splendid mansion, taking his cheap little girl along with him. . . .

XV

VIOLIN AND BOW

Franzl's f a v o u r i t e liqueur was *Kontuschovka*[1], Madame Elvira inclined to *Danziger Goldwasser*[2]. However, she ordered tea on this occasion, specifically for three, with rum and lemon on the side, knowing that the count never touched rum in his tea, but she also understood the conditions of this meeting. . . .

When the count entered with Agnes on his arm from the *Fiaker* at the curb, she was forced to hide a smile. Pretty the child was, no doubt of that, but of what stratum! She almost shivered to see the depth of his taste. . . .

"Ah, my dear, what an honour," she said sententiously, clasping in a confidential manner the hand Agnes bashfully held out to her and attempted to withdraw. . . . "Franzl has told me something of your trouble. It is most appalling. I am ready to do what I can. . . "

Elvira was in black taffeta, high-collared, with sleeves to the elbow, and she scarcely resembled by worthy daylight the equivocal duenna of the night . . . she was cunningly groomed, not to impress with her slyness or her vileness but with solidity—the official-of-Vienna's wife to a nicety. Franzl could not have found her in a more becoming pose. . . .

"We will go into the living-room, where you shall tell me all the details, dear child. How revolting! to have your good father in the city prison. . . . "

"He 's in the county jail now," said Agnes, following her, backed up by Franzl. . . . "I saw him for the

[1]A Polish brandy.

[2]liqueur like Anisette with small particles of gold leaf, exported from Danzig.

first time today and he was on his way in the patrol. Do you really think there's a chance to get 'im out?"

"I shall do my best, and my husband will help me," smiled Elvira.

The tea came in. . . .

"Sit here, my dear."

Agnes looked about the room, shyly, in awe. She had never been in an environment of such splendour before. . . . On the large grand piano in the corner a violin was resting, a sumptuous couch was in another corner thrown over with a velvet scarf. Mirrors, full length, and Persian silk rugs and damask draperies added to a most lavish interior. The chairs were fashioned in a period, laid in with gold leaf, the chandeliers were crystal. . . .

"Tell me, dear child, now, how long did you say Mr. Urban had been in this trouble? and go into the details while we are having tea. . . What will you have—rum?" . . .

Agnes was not sure. Elvira put in a liberal dose, satisfying, she knew, the designs of Franzl, whose eyes, although she kept her own on the tea things, she felt were fixed upon her. . . . To him she gave lemon, knowing his choice, and took, herself, cream. . . .

"The fact is, we would do a great deal for Franzl. . . . he is such a fine fellow! My husband is quite wrapped up in him. . . ."

Agnes started in with Huber and she gave the account of the arrest all over again. She was so adroitly led by Elvira, who took the lead in everything, assuming the rôle with a facility that astonished Franzl, that, ere long, the tea was finished, the last details spoken and Elvira rose to her feet.

"You children will have to amuse yourselves until I return . . . I am going for Léopold myself. I am convinced from what you have told us a great injustice has been done, your father ought to be out of jail

and I think Léopold can get him out. . . . So, therefore, unless some unforeseen difficulty should arise, expect me with good news, well——"

Franzl suggested, " . . . not before an hour?"

"No, no, I think not. It will be all of an hour. Do you mind, my dear?" She placed her arm with solicitude about Agnes, drawing her to her.

Agnes commenced to stammer. She was overwhelmed at this unaccustomed kindness—

"Going yourself! Ooh, madame, if it will only help papa—if you only knew——"

"Expect the best . . . remember I shall work for you!"

Elvira rang for her hat, coat and gloves.

"And now, my children, I leave you . . "

She gave Agnes a resounding smack . . .

After Elvira had left, Franzl contrived to seat Agnes beside himself in as close a proximity as their chairs and acquaintance would provide. She was full of gratitude . . .

"Oh," she said, and tears commenced to well into her eyes from the emotion of her thoughts,—"it is so wonderful to have a friend in need, like you . . . What would I do? I know nobody and the police are so—so— no one ever offered to help me before—without askin' something in return . . . but you, you don't . . ."

Franzl grasped this unpleasant line of thought—to him. He shook his finger, simulating play, at her—

"Don't you be too sure about that, little one."

She looked at him with trusting eyes—

"You might say so . . . but I know you wouldn't . . . "

"Is that so? You don't know me well enough . . . "

"Yes, I do. This is simply wonderful!"

Agnes rose to her feet and commenced with childish curiosity to inspect the furnishings . . .

Meanwhile, Elvira had not left the house . . . She

had walked as loudly as possible to the front door, opened and slammed it without going outside, removed her shoes with discretion and returned through the entrance hall into an adjoining chamber—one apart from that just vacated but connected with it through a small door, tightly shut, but thin and not really more than a board partition . . . Through this she contrived to listen. There was a double purpose in this, one, her duty to Franzl in the pursuance of her business, the other, her pleasure toward herself, for Elvira, bred of the five-rouble house and the refined brothel, satiated her warped tastes in watching the advances of illicit love . . .

She now settled herself to listen at intervals. In the rest periods, there was a couch in the small antechamber, a bottle of *Cliquot,* some cigarettes with her own monogram, and a copy of Freud!

Elvira smiled delightedly. A good hour promised . . . She stretched out on the couch, her eyes on the "Interpretation of Dreams," and her ears on the room nearby.

"It must be wonderful to own nice things . . I never knew how poor we were until just this minute . . "

The conversation did not interest her. It was preliminary . . .

Franzl replied: "I am not much better off than you, not much at least. I have sold a good many neckties of late and can afford a cab and a few pennies, but the fact is, wealth comes to so very few . . . It is only us can appreciate it.

She thought he was a pretty good liar.

Agnes had not much further to say. Her conversation was limited. She looked about, marking herself in a full-length mirror, turning away with less bouyancy from the inspection. . . The piano attracted her, she touched a few keys with her fingers very lightly. . . .

"Do you play?"

She shook her head.

A thought struck him. This was a cold beginning. How to come to closer grips with the girl was not clear, yet—upon the piano lay the violin. Franzl could play—very well. He took up the instrument, tuned it with experienced fingers at the keyboard and commenced to run over a chromatic scale.

"Oh, how I wish I could do that!" cried the girl, her eyes lighting. "I don't play nothin' but the grind-organ . . . I always wished I did, but we never had the money . . . "

It was strange, but the moment she thought of Huber, her language fell into the illiteracy of the Wurstelprater.

"What kind of pieces do you like the best?"

"A waltz . . . sometimes in the evenin' a strain comes with the wind into my ears from somewhere, an' I could sing an' cry—all at once." She was on the verge of tears . . .

Franzl, noting this and the sentimental strain in her, commenced to play the melody of the beautiful waltz of Strauss from "The Waltz Dream": *"Da Draussen im Duftenden Garten."* He played with feeling, his rhythm was perfect . . . She stopped in ecstacy and stood where she was to listen.

But these sounds, far from holding Elvira to the couch, caused her to arise with a cynical smile. What splendid methods he used, to be sure! playing on the emotions of the girl. . . . She swung herself to the key-hole of that thin partition and placed her eye to look out. . . . There stood Franzl, slowly advancing upon the girl. Presently he had crossed the room, playing directly to her, holding the instrument so close it was almost whispering into her ear. . . . Tears commenced to trickle down Agnes' cheeks. Franzl finished the last strain, he felt her silence and replaced the violin softly . . . he

clasped her hands and started to kiss them, drawing her to him . . .

"Agnes, tell me, have you ever loved anyone?"

Still the affair was in its preliminaries, and Elvira returned to her couch.

"Have you ever been in love?"

"Yes," answered Agnes, "of course. My mother and my father . . . "

He patted her hands—

"I didn't mean that, though . . . I mean the love of woman for a man . . . "

"Why, yes . . . Bartholomew, the little hunchback that you met . . . he loves me, he has told me so . . . "

"Do you love him?"

She nodded sagely—"He is the only friend I had . . . "

"Do you really know what love is?"

"I—I think so."

"What is it?"

"When you like someone so well that you'd do everything for him." . . .

Franzl gave the shabby-dressed little stranger with the beautiful face a searching look. His heart vacillated for one beat—

"Do you love *me,* Agnes?"

She thought, she was embarrassed, she looked up at him at last—and nodded . . .

"Then, if you love me, you said you would do anything for me . . . Now I will ask you for a kiss . . . "

He drew her within the enclosure of his arm . . . she was pitifully shy, but lifted her lips obediently, like a child. He hesitated only the fraction of a second, then, pressing her with a sudden transport to his breast, he bent back her head, so deeply that she suffered, and kissed her with all the abandon of his strength!

She felt a pang that was ecstacy and terrible pain! a quiver that ran through her body and rouged her

face as unnaturally as if she had used unfamiliar paste! She felt a danger and was ready to fly, and a weakness that rooted her to the ground . . . Under these emotions she was quite powerless and commenced to tremble so violently that he released her, saying "Are you hurt?" in alarmed tones . . .

But she was not hurt, only something had happened to her that was strange and awesome. She did not understand and cried quietly, shaking her head . . .

"I thought I had—had— Agnes, don't you love me?"

But now she became frightened and retreated from him, remembering—this was the same passion, the same fright! She felt as if she were living it all over again—Huber, the vulgarity; Franzl, the refinement: it was all of one pattern.

"Come, Agnes, don't go away from me, if you love me . . . " he followed her, he was growing more insistent with each step,—"I love you, I want you. You don't know what love is or you wouldn't go away from me . . ." Still she retreated . . . "Come, don't be childish . . . look at me!" She looked. "You see I want you." Desire was stamped on his features. "I am not playing. When I ask, I want." . . .

Panicstricken, she put her hands up in prayer to him—this man who pursued her, frightened her, whom she—she— But he made a lunge and took her roughly, almost beastially . . . "Oh-ho," he laughed—"oh you little kidder! I see now through your game . . . you little would-be lily! you angel from the gutter heap . . . "

He caught her up deliberately and started with her toward the couch in the room, velvet-covered, appetising and clean.

Elvira listened to this from the other side of the room. She would have liked to be present. All the details were fascinating to her, like the game that little children play when they crave amusement and divert

themselves—marbles, basketball, toys! But as hard as she listened, she heard nothing . . . and a few moments passed in absolute and astounding silence. A blanket seemed to have fallen upon the whole sordid scene, and whatever Franzl was attempting, nothing came from beyond the door,—a whole hour in a few seconds swallowed up in the expectation of some dark purpose and event . . .

Franzl had laid Agnes on the couch. He was throbbing and his temples expanded until the blood seemed to focus there from his whole body. She was still . . . she turned her face to the wall . . .

A moment comes in the life of everyone when struggle becomes vain, the Fates take charge—life moves or does not move according to chance and not according to conscious will or the last atom of the expended strength.

When Franzl leaned over the pitiful figure on the couch, he observed her worn skirt, her frayed sleeves, the hard contours of her boots and the abundant wavy hair of the dark head against the blue background . . . He was perplexed. Again the same indecision, the pause to consider what he had always passed over with a shrug—virtue or non-virtue in a woman . . . What mattered it? And yet—now the satisfaction was at hand, he could not brazenly go forward in defiance of a newly arisen—with this girl—almost delicate scruple . . . It might have been the very weakness of the prey in his clasp, like the last faint flutterings of a sparrow . . .

His words rang in her ears: she was a kidder and had a game to play!

Slowly the head on the splendid sofa moved, she looked at him—

"And I thought you were so different . . . But you were right in saying—that I didn't—know—you—yet . . . "

A world of regret was in her tones, a sigh escaped her lips, the blue eyes, filled with reproach, gazed sadly into his . . . "You are like all the rest—like Huber and—all the balance, just the same . . . I thought—but it's all gone now. My dream is over—it's been nothing but a dream." . . . The blue eyes swam slowly in tears, she was silently weeping.

And the mistress of the establishment where lavish love existed and small passions were as easily satisfied in an atmosphere of wealth and a costly setting, seeing Franz hesitate, now saw his face harden, he grimaced as if whatever had been spoken applied to him personally and was repugnant, and he placed his knee on the couch . . . —when a slight sound in the room caught his attention. It was a noise like a single rap on a pane of glass with a blunt instrument . . . He caught himself and drew back, commencing to look about the room . . . such a little noise it was!

Small things attract the attention, a draught of wine can upset a kingdom.

Franzl recognised presently what had happened—the "A" string on the violin had snapped from strain and was curling up around the handle of the instrument.

When these things occur they are taken by many people as a sign or a signal, and can break a spell more easily than whole forces of arms or the pleas of a pretty woman. And so Franzl, seeing what had happened to the violin that had just played a lovely tune, was robbed of his desire to commit a fault which a moment before held so much importance . . . It was the snapping of a string—the very first chord of Agnes' disillusionment—that was to Franzl the symbol of his act: to destroy the beautiful instrument, with strings as fine as a violin, as taut, as easily played upon by the hands of men—the soul of a woman.

XVI

"OUT THERE IN THE BLOSSOMING GARDEN"

Elvira was disgusted by what she termed in her own mind maudlin sentiment, out of place with gay young pigeons, and so forth and so forth . . . She put on her things as the hour had passed and rapped at the door.

Franzl was rising from his knees.

Having asked for pardon for his words and receiving it from Agnes, he helped her to straighten herself and the couch, and opened the door to the hallway . . .

"Well, I am all out of breath! I have been hurrying so fast that it is necessary for me to sit down . . . I shall be unable to talk for five minutes." Elvira exaggerated her mock errand and was perfectly ready and able to go right on. "Have you children managed to find something interesting in each other's company? I was sorry to leave you, my dear. Come, I haven't embraced you."

She felt a wicked desire, in thus taking Agnes to her breast, in levelling, over her head, certain darts at the count, betraying to him that she thought he was about the most consummate idiot in all the world.

"Come, Franzl, did you show Miss Urban the wallpaper and the ceiling? or did you play the piano and sing? What did you do that was wicked? nothing? . . . I declare! . . . My dear child, I have arranged it all . . . my husband has taken over the entire matter, your father will be out tomorrow. Franzl, will you see to it—that Mr. Urban is taken down to his daughter tomorrow? The release has gone in, you have only to see Léopold and he will tell you what

further action takes place tomorrow . . . I am very sorry that it is too late today.

"Come again, and don't fail us, Franz . . . you have a habit of late—well . . . " she shrugged her shoulders, looking at him with open contempt, "you don't always carry out—er—" Reassuming the rôle of the commissary's wife, she added: "But in this case, as there is a pretty girl, perhaps you will keep it in mind . . . "

"I will keep it in mind," responded Franzl coolly.

"And I want to thank you, with all my heart!" Agnes cried; "you have been so——"

"Don't mention it, my dear."

"My father will want to come and thank you himself."

"Oh, as to that," said Elvira, slyly, "we never receive bribes . . . Franzl will pay the bill—if he hasn't forgotten how to collect." . . .

Agnes, understanding nothing, looked her thanks, kissed Elvira again and went from the house with Franz Meier.

They did not continue together to the Wurstelprater. At the *Fiaker* Franz took her hand,—"I am sorry, Agnes, for what I said. I didn't mean one word . . . and if I did, I now know better. You have promised to forgive me. I love you and I want to see you again . . . It will be tomorrow, and then—then—if you feel that you do forgive me . . . if you have one particle of love left for me, I won't ask—I'll just—wait . . . " He gave the cabby the fare for her return . . .

"And now—good-bye . . . " he lifted her hand, as he would that of a great lady, to his lips . . . She saw him wistfully looking after her as the coachman whipped up his horse.

The following day passed in dreary monotony for Agnes. She remembered his kiss on her hand and in-

spected the place to see if anything of the glorious moment remained. She thought how he had lifted it—exactly as they did in the court . . . she saw his handsome head with the pained expression, as if he were a hurt child, bending over it . . . She was very much in love and wondered if Bartholomew, now that she realized it herself, could read it from her face. The hunchback was watching her closely, acting on the platform before Rossreiter's, calling out his invitation to "walk right in . . . don't push, there is a place for everyone!" in his usual droning tone and sending Boniface out with nuts to draw up children and attract old people to the concession . . .

Huber kept his distance. She saw n o t h i n g of Huber, and awaited her father with much impatience.

The whole day passed. The night brought the usual clamour, bells ringing, barkers' raucous voices, the swarms of the pleasure-seekers, and calm, beautiful evening in the Prater park. She even wandered in there, smelled the lilac bushes, purple and white, and so full of sweet, pungent odour that it seemed like a separate world—one full of incense and longing, warm tears of expectation and of joy; the chestnut trees hung their heavy and spreading branches overhead, acacias blossomed and the sky was like a vast, protecting shield spangled with stars, cool and shimmering in a thousand places . . . She wandered about and returned to the concession.

Nine o'clock had come. Mrs. Rossreiter, having put another man at the Punch and Judy theatre, was exhibiting her own fat bulk, dancing up and down on her toes in ballet skirts and selling the tickets for her *Wundersalon.* She questioned her:

"See anythin' of 'em yet, honey? Where 's your father? Think they're comin' yet? . . . well, now, I'd hate t' see ya disappointed, but it's gettin' late . . . "

Agnes had told her and Bartholomew of her father's expected release.

"He said he'd bring 'im and I know he won't disappoint me," insisted Agnes doggedly, and hoped against hope the miracle would happen so her faith in Franz Meier would be justified.

But if it had not been, it probably would have made no difference. Love is all-forgiving . . . it banishes sorrow and it glosses over doubt.

Among the merrymakers one *Fiaker* is a good deal like another. The one-horse cab bringing Franzl and Sylvester drew up without notice and the occupants stepped out. Delayed at the Hofburg until two o'clock, the *Flügeladjutant* had struck some of the legal tape which is like a ball with the nut in the center and must be unwound before the kernel is reached . . . and it was six hours before all points of the law were satisfied—that nothing had to be satisfied—and Sylvester was a free man!

Agnes saw them first as Boniface made a spring from the platform and circled about their legs. Sylvester he knew, Franzl he took little notice of, but crept up and sat, to the amusement of the crowd, his head cocked underneath the grotesque liberty cap and his mouth moving over and over, making little nickering sounds at the former manipulator of marionettes . . . When this attracted her attention and she spied Sylvester, she ran forward and embraced him with a glad cry—

"Papa! I am so happy . . . I have been waiting! Papa, it is so good to see you . . . " She kissed his hands and face, stroking his cheek, resting her head one moment against his coat and the next against his arm, and repeating over and over, "You came, you came, you came! . . . "

The fat lady also saw him, and Batholomew, who cut his spiel short in the middle and then turned his gaze to the man who had brought Sylvester, toward

whom he had developed the suspicious feeling of a love-rival since his first night on the Prater in April. A weird expression came into Bartholomew's astounded eyes and he found himself paralyzed all at once! . . . This young man who was so discreetly holding himself in the background, smiling shyly, and with little dirty children and coarse wet-nurses and soldiers from Moravia pressing against him in the intimacy of warm June night air in the public walk of the pleasure ground, dust being kicked up, cries of cheap circus attractions, the smell that goes with excitement and rabble, and peppermint stick-candies being licked by tongues of urchins like calves, and their mothers and big sisters like cows, standing with their hands on their hips beneath puffed out bosoms and mouths open, drinking in the noise of the concessionaires and the dust!—he saw him there, the tall, upright figure in checked suit, well-fitting, with cuffs on the trousers, his hat and cane in his hand and moustache waxed in the Austro-French shape—*"Es ist Erreicht!"*[1]—as if he were a Life Guard Mounted and rode on the Parforce Hunt[2] . . . or a high official entering the palace, when a sentinel would cry out—

"Geweeeehr—herauuuussss!"[3]

Or he might be an emperor's *Kammerer*[4] with eighteen generations of ancestry behind him and a gold key at the waist . . . The *Trabanten*[5] wore such moustaches when they marched before the Bellario, near where the Mariahilferstrasse joins the Ringstrasse, passing Breitengasse in their mediæval scarlet coats with gold breasts, white tights and *Stulpenstiefel*[6], and spiked helmets with white flowing horse-hair plumes,

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[1]it is accomplished!
[2]cross-country fox chasing.
[3]Rifles Out! the salute for personages.
[4]chamberlain at the court.
[5]ancient life guards.
[6]tall boots.

the tallest and handsomest men in the army—like this young man, who was so straight and as tall as a poplar!—the *Helbard*[1] carriers, passing from the Burg to their armory on gala occasions such as the Corpus Christi festival . . .

Bartholomew remembered especially the last Corpus Christi procession when he stood on the Breitengasse before the armory and watched them pass in. It was a great sight and the working people held their breaths in awe . . . The procession had just taken place and was disbanding. The Church of Rome observed the doctrine of the Eucharist the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday—an established custom dating back before the Hapsburg dynasty to 1264—the Hapsburgs came on in 1276—from the time of the Pope Urban IV . . .

The wind was blowing gently though the day was warm. It always blew in the Bellario and he thought he could smell the violets from the Wiener Wald. Everybody sniffed, passing here, and they inhaled with great satisfaction; but it was probably the pungent odour of manure coming out of the imperial and royal stables quartered near . . . the crispness of the winter's snows could not even blanket that when the breeze fluttered in exactly the right direction . . .

After the *Trabanten* came a fine livery with two horses and the Hapsburg coat-of-arms, clattering by, on the way to the *corso* . . . for, even on holy days, children from the family of the court had to have an airing, so the nurse rode, taking the salutes by the side of the imperial and royal baby—some young boy who would grow to be a man about court, high and mighty and with privileges of the rich and just such a moustache!

And so powerful is the association of thoughts, that Franzl's military moustache, waxed *"Es ist Erreicht!"*

[1]battle-ax.

gave Bartholomew a whole three minutes of musing as the Count von Hohenegg stood in the Volksprater and the lower classes swam about him who served the meekest among them and pretended to be of her level.

Agnes felt the impulse to embrace him . . . She grasped his hand and tried to bring her lips to it in gratitude, but he prevented this by keeping his arm down at his side by force and protesting—"It is nothing . . . really, it is nothing . . . "

Her eyes brimmed over. She took her father's arm and drew them both with her.

"Let us go in . . . this noise, I cannot hear . . . it is so good to have you back again, papa, and Mrs. Rossreiter says your old job is yours . . . a new man runs the Punch and Judy, from Astarte's, but he's no good . . . he doesn't know the first thing and the kids don't come any more and look on as they used to . . . he don't make anybody laugh . . . "

She was chattering, drawing them both along—

" . . . they don't sit on the benches an' goo like when you did it . . . see, papa, everybody missed you, Boniface has been so cranky of late . . . he almost bit Huber yesterday . . . well, he teases him, it isn't right, and pulls his tail . . . Are you hungry? do you want me to get you some *Würstchen*[1] right out of the water, hot? there 's a man with a wagon outside . . . "

Sylvester patted her hand—

"No, no, you go on . . . I'm all right . . . I'll just go and see——" and he started off behind the little theatre where the marionettes were lying limp, and picked up a tiny rabbit, hopping there, and took him with him in his arms to put into the circus with the little actors . . . His eyes were wet and he was anxious to recover himself . . .

Agnes watched him go.

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[1]sausages.

"Poor papa . . it 's been a fearful thing, this sittin' in prison . . . " She turned to Franz. All at once they were dumb. In the great clamour of the Wurstelprater they felt as if only two stood there—themselves, isolated from everything else, life, gaiety, noise, racket . . . silence fell between them and their arms, which had been locked, and their hands, dropped apart . . .

Sometimes the heart is too full to express even a tithe of what it holds and the lips tremble but cannot articulate and the temples grow moist . . .

Standing side by side, a similar impulse moved them both—out of that babel of sounds and quantities of people, to step into the quiet garden by themselves . . . to have just this sweet moment in common, to press each other's hands and to sigh in the stillness . . . to see the *Riesenrad* in the distance, revolving its tiny lights, and the giant chestnut spreading overhead . . . to smell the lilac and sit among the acacia in solitude and peace . . .

They went out of the concession—at the foot of the stairways was no one—they went past the stairways and through the dim little alley and the gate of the garden, along the shimmering path . . . Shadows fell upon the path, moving, tiny blossoms, sprinkling through the air invisible showers of perfume like the streaming censers of a church . . . the air became heavy . . . In the park, before the trunk of their chestnut tree, was a bench. They seated themselves here, arms entwined, drinking in the fragrance and softness of the night.

Underneath their feet the crickets chirped; above was the song of the nightingale . . . The moon shone on the three-quarter, shedding a silver, half-invisible ring into the fringe of clouds travelling over to the clear dome beyond . . .

From the gay spendthrift of love and his chattel, these two were transformed into equals—lovers. They

stood on one footing, or, if there were any advantage, it was in her favour . . . he hung upon her words. She pointed her lips and he kissed them; she placed her head tenderly on his breast, he caressed it . . . The true passion of their love had levelled their stations, and, guided only by nature, and with no motive except such as is written in the book of time and which stands for generation after generation, immutable, holy, changeless as the restless sea, and everlasting,—they clasped hearts and mated under the pure evening light . . .

XVII

SERAJEVO

In the south of Austria-Hungary and much nearer Belgrade, which is in Serbia, than Vienna, was the city frequently called "The Damascus of the North," spread over a narrow valley closed on the east by a semi-circle of rugged hills . . . Though oriental and wholly beautiful with its Turkish bazaar, hundred mosques with minarets like church steeples above them, wooden houses and cypress groves, Serajevo was largely rebuilt in the latter part of the last century in the European fashion . . .

There remains, however, still the *Sinan Tekke,* which is the Dervish monastery and, in contrast, upon a cliff commanding a complete view of the city, the castle and barracks of an Austrian garrison of troops . . .

In the latter part of June, when the court of Vienna was planning to remove to Schönbrunn, the emperor's summer residence, the Hauptallee was flowing with carriages of the rich and the Wurstelprater held its motley assemblage of the pleasure-seeking poor, this Austrian garrison received word or heard the rumor, which was in effect through "The Damascus of the North," that a great state visit was to take place,—an envoy of Vienna was on the way to Bosnia and the country was to prepare for open hospitality and celebration . . . The troops polished their bayonets and buttons, their commander had his gala uniform brushed and sponged, flags were hoisted—the red-white and black-yellow of the dual monarchy,—and the Austrian *Daimler* car of the governor general was gotten ready

to meet the envoy and conduct him in state through the crowded streets.

These preparations were made.

But in the Turkish quarter still the dark lanes were lined with booths that catered to the daily trade; silks and embroideries were sold . . . the baths remained open and had their usual clientele. The perfumed cafés swung their doors with the same quiet custom, the patrons came and went and talked of everything but the Austrian envoy . . . this meant nothing to them—they were ruled through the mosques of their religion and kept the peace of the government that was so many miles away in Vienna and cared nothing for the doings of a few silent Turks in Serajevo.

The ruins of the Romans who conquered through here before the time of the first Hapsburg by a thousand years, crumbled caverns and towers of dust, remained as mute as ever, hiding places for antiquity and never disturbed by celebration, but only by the quiet students from the great university and far-off professors who came to search and delve, but never flew their nations' flags or emitted a single cheer . . .

In the Dervish monastery of *Sinan Tekke* a ceremony was in progress.

Anyone passing the doors would have thought the envoy was already inside, for here, in truth, was the sound of a great revelry and of cries and crowds and mad orgies to have satisfied the most gala event . . . for it was the day of atonement in the religion of these monks, when they prayed, gyrated and punished themselves,—the day of repentance, of the freeing from sin, purging . . . and they turned, leaped in fantastic costumes, pirouetted, screamed and howled, one about the other in a circle, then separately and more enthusiastically until their feet seemed to leave the ground altogether and they spun dizzily in space, ten, twenty, a hundred, five hundred times without stopping or at-

tempting to rest . . . And all this without sinking down, becoming worn or giving out . . . the most fantastical custom in the world, the most terrible religious ceremony because it attains the highest ecstacy: the Dancing Dervishes of Bosnia! . . .

Europeans are never allowed to behold this ceremony. The envoy from Vienna could not have seen it . . . He was travelling south on his imperial and royal train with his wife, his suite, chamberlains, aides and imperial dignitaries,—but he could not behold what was happening in his own possession, in a city he had annexed by the power of the greater over the weaker and his position as heir to the throne of Austro-Hungary. . . . It was His Imperial Highness, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, d'Este, the nephew of Franz-Josef I, who was making an ill-advised visit to Bosnia for no other purpose than to see the results of the conflict between two kinds of Slavs warring silently between themselves in this province,—the Catholic Slavs against the Orthodox Slavs, or, in other words, one kind of Slavs against the other; and the reason was that the Slavs who followed the first church were praying according to the Austrian custom and those who followed the second were praying according to the Serbian, each jealous of the other and both determined to reach Heaven in their own ways. . . .

Franz Ferdinand had a leaning toward the Austrian Slavs. His wife was a Bohemian, the Countess Chotek, elevated to rank by the emperor as the Duchess Hohenberg . . . Her devotion to Franz Ferdinand was an open topic of conversation in Vienna court circles. . . .

By downing the Serbian Slavs the Austrians would come up, and, like the water in a tube which flows out from the opposite end where it is depressed,—the archduke raised the standing of his Austrian house by depressing the enemy. But it was not a good thing for him to be too close to Serbia—to the province of Bos-

nia, which was annexed to Austria against its will, and, especially, not too close to Serajevo!

But the Austrian garrison of troops would see to it that the City of Palaces[1] welcomed its future ruler with decorations and acclaim! . . . flags flew from buildings, hung into the streets—splashes of colour that showed the intense patriotism of the people, according to the soldiers! and the bands of music stirred up enthusiasm, filling the streets with people, the sidewalks, the steps of the mosques, the hills overlooking the city and the limbs of tall trees in the cypress groves. . . .

The law students paraded with an arm on the shoulder of each other in single file behind the bands, happy of a chance to sing and shout . . . Students are the same the world over and Moslem law students in Bosnia are very occidental, growing up in Europe. . . .

The river Miljacka flowed along its banks, watering the city; the railroad came in from Bosna-Brod, over which the archduke rode in his special train of sleepers and diner and princely equipment . . . Austrian archdukes have always travelled like kings and this one was almost on the throne, being the heir of a very aged man and considering himself the real ruler. . . . His wife thought likewise, she was proud and haughty . . . and the train leaped over the rails, casting off steel dust and drawing into the city that was full of excitement—of one kind or another—to receive the envoy. . . .

Every country has its revolutionists.

It is not to be thought that Bosnia was without them. Secret societies were flourishing, young students joined them, spoke against one government until they got another, railed against that,—and so it goes . . . The secret societies of Bosnia were the Orthodox Slavs—young, fine fellows, educated to think and thinking that they were oppressed and should never have been an-

[1]palaces, from *Serai,* the Turkish word,—Serajevo.

nexed to Austria-Hungary against their will. If they were Austrian subjects it was not their fault. . . .

Two of these, especially, were very fanatical on the subject. The names were Cabrinovic and Princep, names taken, evidently, to correspond to the precepts of their society. It stood for freedom in everything—not unusual with such societies—the Nihilists were the same in Russia and the Sinn Fein in Ireland. It stood for principle. Principle—Princep!

The young man whose name was Princep, and who understood so well the principle of life that he could take it in his own hands, was young, swarthy, medium-sized, moustached, zealous, brave and really fearless as a lion. . . .

He undertook the duty—having been elected to the position by his society—to judge the government in Austria . . . And he judged and condemned—in his own mind . . . and so he took out his modern revolver with automatic rapid-fire chambers, and oiled it, made ready, loaded it,—and he took his place among the spectators on the parade street to see His Imperial Highness, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his morganatic wife, the Duchess Hohenberg, with the military governor of Bosnia and an aide, ride by in the governor's Austrian car. . . .

He stood next to his friend, Cabrinovic, also armed, who was behind a line of policemen who were preceded by a cordon of soldiers . . . The red-white and black-yellow flags from a neighbouring building were hanging down into his face. He must have been glad of this, because, while the flags represented his enemies, still they hid his face and jacket from the police. And underneath the jacket was—the revolver. . . .

What followed is well known. A full conspiracy was afoot . . . A line of bomb-throwers was at one end of the march. School-girls with arranged bouquets were at another. A man with a dagger was also on

the street, and it is even said that the dogs of Serajevo were corrupted and held on leashes, mad, to launch at the throats of the archduke and duchess if every other means failed! . . .

But of all this mortal preparation, Princep, the "principle" of his society, struck the blow that ended by freeing his country from Austrian domination. . . .

He waited until the cheering from the stimulated crowd rose to its climax—the royal party was just before, passing . . . nobody saw him, all were too busy cheering . . . and the soldiers allowed him to slip in between their ranks, level his revolver coolly and fire point-blank at the saluting Archduke Franz Ferdinand!

The shot rang out! The people scattered . . .the troops looked on. Before anyone could hold his arm or deflect his aim, he had killed the duchess, who had thrown herself before her husband to shield him, killed the archduke and was still shooting! . . .

The excitement of the populace turned to amazement, the amazement into riot. The police closed in, the troops took the murderer. . . .

A succession of explosions like the back-firing of an engine or the rattle of machine-gun fire . . .silence . . . screams . . . pandemonium!

A young man thinks he has done his duty,—and the guards have hustled him to jail. . . .

Slumped over are the proud figures in the Austrian *Daimler* which is being driven to the governor's residence, known in Serajevo as the *Konak,* but now more nearly resembling a morgue! and the Dancing Dervishes in the *Sinan Tekke* have gone 'round and 'round and 'round. . . .

An epic in history has been made!

XVIII

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND GOES 'ROUND

On coming back to the Wurstelprater, Sylvester did not take over his old job at the marionettes. He became a comic dancer, which means wearing a clown's costume, whitening the face, drawing black lines around in imitation of a big mouth, a pug nose, squint eyes, very long and flat, and an artificial round curl like a scroll on the forehead.

Sylvester danced. He stood on the platform beside the fat woman, Mrs. Rossreiter, and underneath the heavy metal sign reading *"WUNDERSALON,"* with the balance of her attractions and name, and attached to the boards above her concession with thin steel wires caught into hooks,—played a guitar at intervals and sang. Then he lifted his comic full trousers, big and baggy and fastened around his feet with ruffles, spread them out on both sides of him, and pirouetted, making the pantomimes of a hilarious jackanapes or a drunken fellow, as the crowd might relish. . . .

He drew a crowd. Before the booth was a swarming congestion of the *Pratervolk*[1], big and little, but mostly little, laughing at his antics and kicking up a whirl of dust trying to imitate him. . . .

Huber's concession next door was empty. Try as he would, the owner of the *Kraftsmaschine* and *Ringelspiel* could not draw. He did not know what was the cause of the poor attendance nor the large crush before the neighbouring concession, but he determined to find out . . . So dense was the throng that the lower portion of Sylvester's body was completely hidden; only

[1]people on the Prater.

his face showed with the outstanding and ridiculous ruffle about the neck under the chin, and so painted was it, Huber did not recognize for several minutes the features of his late enemy . . . And when he did so, a spasm of anger shook him that caused his face to turn as pale as the clown's mask before him!

On stepping on the platform, Sylvester carried with him a heavy heart. The recent end of his suffering wife and Agnes' bitter experience with Huber, aside from his eight weeks in prison, had unnerved him. . . . He shook and trembled, and it was the best thing that he could really dance, since otherwise he would have jerked from palsy from overwrought nerves and probably cried all day.

As it was, a tear stood in either eye. He controlled himself but gave vent to his feelings under the guise of comedy and laughter—wore a smile on his lips, skipped, laughed hysterically and so tragically that the crowds swarmed in on the false jangle and absurdity of his act.

Sylvester threw them kisses...bowed and made pathetic grimaces... It is a fact that most of the jolly fellows in this world have aching hearts, and they laugh the hardest to cover up their hurts.

Huber elbowed in and looked up into his face—Bartholomew was just then barking—

"*Meine Harrschaften, kassa, kassa! soeben ist Anfang und Beginn*—Signor Sylvestro Urbani—direct from Italy—the greatest bajazzo livin'!"—introducing Sylvester in this manner. . .

Huber turned to the crowd, his temper getting the better of him: "Italy—hell! Doncha know the diff'rence between a Bo-heme an' a wop? This guy usta work at the Punch an' Judy—don't let 'em foolya! He ain't no wop!" . . .

"He is so! Wadda you doin' here, Schani Huber?" shrieked the fat woman in high tones: "you get th'hell

oudda here an' take care o' your own booths—this ain't your business, is it?"

"Ain't it, showin' up your dirty dealin's to the crowd?"

"Look out for y'r own!"

"Mine ain't dirty."

"Oh, ain't they? Get out an' stay out, an' spit in your own groun's . . . an' that's final . . . Boniface, come here! Boniface! . . ."

The orang-utang had made a leap after the *Karussell* proprietor, as he went off swinging his cane, after kicking him and bucking him with his foot to the amazement of the audience that was waiting for Sylvester to dance.

Schani Huber saw coming into his own concession, where a handful of people sat on the merry-go-round waiting for it to turn, a medium-sized individual in rather neat civilian clothes for the Wurstelprater, well-pressed, and with a puzzled look on his square peasant's face. He carried two pasteboard boxes, one under each arm, the one under the right arm long and slender, that under the left arm short and square. . .

This individual stood and looked, if possible, in two directions at once, as he was cross-eyed, and he also turned his head, first one way, then the other, with a puzzled expresssion.

The confusion of the barkers and Huber's bawling voice, soliciting trade, confused him all the more as he was not seeking pleasure but some other chance goddess,—and he strode up to the wooden cage where Marianka, the wife of Huber sat selling tickets . . . only she was not selling them now. Business was not rushing.

Huber, blowing his starting whistle, commenced to grind the organ. . . .

"Say once, is it here that a certain *Fraülein* Agnes

Urban lives?" said the cross-eyed man to the ticket-woman. "She works for a place called Rossreiter's."

He looked steadily at Marianka with his mouth remaining open as if he were too dazed by some attraction he saw in her to close it.

She commenced to blush—

"Not here . . . next door. . . ."

"Which way?"

She pointed with her finger, "To the left. . . ."

"And this . . . what is this?"

"She used to work here," commenced Marianka,—"but—but, it's over there she works now . . . where you see the fat lady. That's Mrs. Rossreiter herself, she's the fat woman, an' her father's dancin' on the front . . . he's a clown, Sylvester Urban. . . ."

"Um-hum. . . ."

There were two or three people behind the talker at the ticket cage who intended to buy trips on the merry-go-round. Huber spied them and he spied the congestion . . . he roared out without ceremony above the clatter and *"Wiener Blut"*[1] coming out in forced strains from the organ—

"Hey, cut it—gedda move on! Marianka, *du Frauenzimmer du . . . ich stopff dir das Maul zu wenn du nit schweigst!"*[2]

This abuse, coming from such a far quarter, made Marianka blush still deeper with shame and she hoped the man before her would go away. But he still looked at her with his half-hesitant, half-hypnotised stare. . . .

"You want tickets?"

He shook his head.

What did he want? Was he looking for Agnes?

"Hey, get through! . . . *du Luder du . . . du gemeines*—" Huber's abuse reached filthy stages,

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[1]a popular waltz.

[2]vulgar German "Fool woman, shut up!"

and the stranger gave his wife a sympathetic glance. . . .

"I feel sorry . . ." he commenced, "th-thanks, I think I can find it."

Embarrassed, he left, looking back at her. She was a young woman with her hair drawn away from her ears and an apron about her waist that was without stays and without too much fat. Her face had several scars that would never heal and her neck a fresh black and blue mark from Huber's infernal abuse that would not have been noticed but she put her hand on it, self-consciously, all the time.

Now, after selling her tickets and seeing the man with the bundles vanish, she perceived on the shelf before her a little heap of peppermint candies, five or six, laid there just fresh. They were not there a moment before . . . She knew he had put them down without her notice. She placed one in her mouth, growing red about the neck again.

The organ stopped and Huber approached her, saying, "Who was that?"

"A man lookin' for Agnes. I sent him over to Rossreiter's. . . ."

"Well, you done too much dam' talkin' and y' lost me two customers. Cut it out next time . . . What's he want o' her?"

Marianka shook her head, her face solemn again.

"Know what he had?"

"No."

He went off mumbling and in the meantime the stranger had crossed the little alley into the next concession. Overhead was the huge metal sign held by wires and screws to the roof of the two-story frame building.

"ROSSREITER'S WUNDERSALON . . .
DIRECT FROM PARIS!"

He read this, speaking the words to himself, en-

quired for Agnes Urban and found her, and was presenting the two boxes he held, one long and narrow, the other square—

"Mister Franz Meier, a friend of mine, sends this to you with best wishes. He wanted me to say he will come down himself this afternoon."

She was astonished and grew quite pale. She looked at the man as if it were a miracle anyone should know of her friendship with Mr. Franz Meier, ripened into the intimate relation of lovers since the night before. . . .

On the long box was written "Fossati . . . Imperial and Royal Court Supplier . . ." on the square one, "Gerstner's . . ." with the same formula.

"If—if you see your friend before I do, thank him for these boxes very much," she stammered . . . "I am much obliged. . . ."

He made her a formal bow, stood very erect, thanked her and was off.

Agnes took the boxes upstairs. She found inside "Fossati's" a bouquet of fresh and sweet-smelling lilies-of-the-valley and violets, and, beneath these, a cluster of very exquisite shell-pink roses, each as perfect as a wax model, with a card "To my Beloved . . ." And the box marked "Gerstner's" contained a choice assortment of bon-bons, candied fruits and nuts. She tasted one of these bon-bons, very hesitatingly . . . She was childish in her amazement and sat for ten minutes at least very quietly on her bed, motionless, absorbed in a dream picture of love, these dainty gifts and Franzl. . . . . She touched the lilies and experimented with a rose in her hair, and, finally, kissed the card softly and placed it in her bosom. . . .

After the first moments, she went further, taking the ribbons that bound the boxes, getting out her little soldier-doll that was in such a dilapidated condition, but, being his very first gift, had the place of honor in

her heart, and she tied the ribbons in various ways over the disordered body. They made a sash under his sorrowful little broken face . . . but Agnes loved him the more for his disfigurements. This doll, since the first evening, had always remained hidden beneath her pillow. She lifted him out occasionally and brushed his uniform over with her hands, held him up, felt the tears coming into her eyes and put him back in his place under the pillow. . . .

The room was as squalid as formerly. She did not try to decorate the empty wooden walls with her flowers or set them about. She had no vase, there was no cup deep enough . . . so she let them lay in the box, unsullied and perfect, their green oil-paper about them and the fashionable box of "Fossati" crying out for more decent surroundings . . . She must show them to Sylvester now . . . and Bartholomew, who would probably cry and groan, because she knew he loved her. But Franzl's love for her would presently become known anyway and she had never given the hunchback the slightest reason to think—

Agnes, who was about to run down the stairs with a very light heart in her bosom, heard a tremendous crash just at this instant sounding at her very feet. Her heart flew into her mouth. She stood perfectly still as the walls rattled around her. She heard sounds from the Prater—a mingling of many shouts, voices raised, the sudden end to the tin-pan music of the piano in Mrs. Rossreiter's *Wundersalon*. . . . She was afraid to stir. . . .

Standing there so still she had not realised, absorbed with her happiness, that a scratching sound had taken place on her roof before the great crash—a body had moved across it, squirming and remaining unseen from below, that this body had raised itself over the side ledge and looked into her window, that she was seen while her back was turned, crooning over her flowers,

and that the prowler was an enemy, whom, had she known he was there, would have given her grave concern. . . .

But she saw neither the enemy nor heard the wires send out a metallic sound, vibrating from handling, loosening from the screws that held them, which, in turn, held the great square sign of the *Wundersalon.*

Sylvester was dancing on the platform below. The sign, without warning, trembled and dropped, striking him from his feet as if he had been a ten-pin hurled into the air by a bowling ball, crashing his body along with itself into the street before the concession filled with pleasure crowds, stampeding and shouting! . . .

The accident had happened so quickly that for a space of time nobody came to Sylvester's assistance. He lay numb and still, the sign on top and only his legs sticking out as his head was crushed underneath. . . .

When Bartholomew, who was the first to recover, came to him, he was almost completely out of sight. Spectators cried and groaned, but they were all too paralyzed by their escape to assist, until he cried, lifting the sign with his full strength at one end, "Pull him out! pull him out!"

Then they all sprang in and pulled, the fat lady with them, and took the injured man from under . . . the hunchback let the heavy sign fall again and shuddered from the strain of lifting it; he straightened and stretched, and without waiting to see if Sylvester were mortally injured, set off down the street for a policeman. . . .

Sylvester with his crushed head was lifted tenderly to the platform. There he was in his fantastic costume.

Agnes, whose breath had come fast and then slower, unable to understand what had happened in her room, ran down the steps . . . Swiftly, she was at the foot of the alley, crossed to the platform, and horrified and

unable to articulate, she saw the fat lady bending over Sylvester.

"Aggie, Aggie," whispered Mrs. Rossreiter, "y'r father's done for, Sylvester's done f'r, poor child, poor child. . . ."

What followed was a nightmare of silence. Agnes neither heard nor saw the crowd on the Wurstelprater, wandering in and out, uttering little questions and curious answers.

Nobody knew how the accident had happened except, Sylvester had been struck on the head by the sign which had become loosened in some manner from the roof, where it had always been secure . . . He had been thrown up and down as it bounced, and catapulted underneath. Moments passed in a void of agony when she realised nothing,—then the return of the hunchback with a policeman who summoned an ambulance . . . she rode with her father. Mrs. Rossreiter's voice droned off in the distance and she saw Bartholomew standing with pitying eye. . . .

And all during this time one accustomed figure was missing from the Wurstelprater. He slid from the roof above Rossreiter's—over the room where she had been sitting with Franz Meier's flowers and the candy from "Gerstner's," he went down into the alley, after having accomplished his mischief on the roof, and up the stairway opposite to his own rooms . . . Here Huber parted the dirty curtains at his window and looked insolently at the tragic scene below . . . He observed it for all of the time until the ambulance drove away, and then he suddenly remembered he had forgotten to blow his whistle in the last ten minutes and he ran down the stairs as fast as his legs could carry him . . . there was his merry-go-round still going 'round and 'round and 'round!

XIX

AN EMPEROR IS ALSO IN SORROW

When the news of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his morganatic wife, the Duchess Hohenberg, reached Vienna, it had come by way of Ischl . . . Emperor Franz-Josef was in summer residence and had only arrived in the mountain resort the night before, two weeks ahead of his usual schedule, which was very exact. . . .

His adjutant general brought him the news.

Franz-Josef stood as if struck by lightning! The dignity of an emperor fought in his breast with the horror of sorrow that touches every human heart alike —he dropped the lids over his glazing eyes, filled with bitterness and the knowledge that his race, the Hapsburgs, was falling before assassins' bullets, a crime that stains the soul with more infernal hue than any other beneath the dome of Heaven!

The emperor then buried himself in thought.

Above, on the roof of his residence, the standard of the Hapsburgs slowly fell to half-mast. . . .

"Horrible! The Almighty does not permit us to challenge Him . . . a higher power has again restored that order which I sadly could not sustain. . . ."

These words, finally drawn from the imperial breast, as he ordered the immediate return of his household to Vienna, disclosed to the adjutant what he had suspected: the emperor had warned his self-willed nephew and the heir to his throne of the reception he might receive from the secret societies in Bosnia, of which he had knowledge. The annexation of the province was against the decision of the people. The heir had to pay the price. . . .

No further comment was made. The emperor silently planned his duties to the dead and the living: the preparations for burial of the parents and guardianship and education of their three children, the princes and princess of Hohenberg, brought to him in the Hofburg for the first time.

When all preparations were made, Franz-Josef, composed, as a man should be after sixty-five years of statecraft and every vicissitude, yet crushed in heart, sat in waiting for the royal corpses from Trieste, whither they came by water . . . His thoughts consumed him. He rose and paced slowly up and down in his study, which faced the inner court. If he had been on the other side of the palace he would have seen, from the windows, the Volksgarten, where a military band generally rendered airs, but where now alone his pensioners walked, commenting on the day's sorrows among themselves and feeding with pistachio nuts a little band of pigeons that strutted from long habit independently about the square, with puffed out breasts . . . No children ran in the park today. Silence hung over the entire city and benches and chairs in the open were left standing, devoid of occupants. . .

Franz-Josef in his study sighed audibly.

He determined at length to go about something in order to employ the passing period, and, as there is always a duty waiting for an emperor in some part of his domain which he can with dignity assume in such a crisis, he sent for his *Flügeladjutant,* to lay before him a routine. . . .

Franz Maxmillian, Count von Hohenegg, in full uniform of the court, with an adjutant's sash falling from one shoulder, entered and stood at attention with the official documents in his hand.

"Gott grüss Euch, Hohenegg . . . Böse Nachrichten, ein grosses Unglück ist uns befallen . . . In meinem Alter ist das sehr schwer zu ertragen. . . ."

Franzl stooped and pressed his lips to the old emperor's hand,

"Majestät . . ." he murmured, the tones of his voice hoarsened by the solemnity of the imperial tragedy.

"Ich danke Ihnen . . . aber schweigen wir darüber. . . ."[1] returned the emperor, and took from his hands the programme of the day, laying it before him on his desk. The programme was composed of four functions. The first and the last were marked *"Ausgelassen. . . ."*[2]

FUNCTIONS OF THE DAY

10 to 12—Audience.
2:30 —Laying of Cornerstone at Joseph Stadter Orphan Asylum.
3:30 —Visit at Kronprinz Rudolph Hospital.
6:30 —Gala Dinner.

The clock stood at fourteen minutes past two.

"Gehen wir jetzt nach dem Joseph Stadter Waisenhaus. . . ."[3]

Franz-Josef made up his mind and acted immediately. He left the room at the side entrance, and after him his adjutant . . . As an order is no sooner given than it is carried out, his carriage was in waiting, he drove off and the guard of honour saluted him—

"Geweeeehr—herauuuusss! Geweeeehr—herauuuusss! Geweeeehr—heruuuusss!" . . . at the palace gate, the officer in charge placing his sword handle three times upon his left breast.

The Kronprinz Rudolph Spital, or hospital, the sec-

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[1]"God greet you, Hohenegg, bad news, a great misfortune has befallen us. In my old days this is very hard to bear."
"Your majesty . . . "
"I thank you . . . but we will say nothing further . . . "
[2]"To be omitted."
[3]"We will go now to the Joseph Stadter Orphan Asylum."

ond objective of the Emperor Franz-Josef I on the 29th day of June, a stone edifice with the letters of the murdered Rudolph of Meyerling's name cut into the stone above the entrance, a touching memorial to the passing of the only son of the Empress Elizabeth and of the emperor—the real heir to the throne,—had, during the hour of the laying of the cornerstone at Joseph Stadter Orphan Asylum, 3:15 o'clock, to be exact, another visitor than the imperial and royal party expected within the hour. This visitor was not destined to leave on his feet, nor did he arrive in this manner; he was brought by the ambulance, which drove in with a clang of bells, the driver, having completed his run, lighting a cigarette and blowing smoke nonchalantly into the dome of heaven. . . .

When the door of the hospital opened, two nurses in the garb of sisterhood stepped out. Their hours of duty were over. They did not stop to see the stretcher-bearers from the ambulance carry the burden indoors . . . it was an accustomed sight. They did not see his bandaged head that took away his vision, hearing, features, hair,—in fact, all of his head, since it was so well covered by the first-aid wrapping of the doctor who rode out and now followed the silent procession in. Nor was the forlorn figure seen that dragged herself over the stones of the courtyard after the doctor and the bearers. . . .

Sylvester's life was at ebb. At most, the doctor knew, it was a question of moments, twenty . . . thirty . . . no longer than that. And the ward which ever yawns for humanity, trampled by traffic tides in the city, by great crimes and petty crimes, the refuge of all ills of the human body in all stations, as Stephansdom is for the soul,—swallowed this victim, encasing him in white sheets, pale and indifferent, between a *Strizzi* picked up in the alley in a diseased condition, not yet isolated, and a track-walker with both legs cut off

by a railroad train, who would continue to live, perhaps to his sorrow . . . He lay perfectly still with Agnes sitting at his side, crumpling the edge of his bedclothes with her nervous fingers . . . It was all a blank to her, still numb, dead indifference—inability to realise this tragedy that out of a clear sky would leave her alone in the world. A kind after-thought of nature deadened her faculties until no more sorrow could enter, like the pores of a sponge that is completely filled with water and cannot absorb a further drop.

The doctors looked in on him, shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads. The nurses passed to and fro, casting sympathetic glances at her who would be his chief mourner when the parting hour came.

The *Strizzi* in the cot murmured out of swollen lips, seeing her abstraction—"*Wir sind alle todt . . . und wenn nicht ganz todt, bald todt. . . .*"[1]

He turned over on his side and his eyelids fluttered . . . . The odour of disinfectants was strangling in the ward . . . pallid faces looked out from sunken pillows, following the incoming of visitors as if they expected a word or a look from one of their own, somebody's mother, wife, chambermaid sweetheart . . . a father, a brother, a fellow apache . . . Sunlight fell in squares on the floor. Warmth permeated everything, natural and brought in by the season.

The silence of the white ward with its outstretched figures, the shuffling of the visitors' feet at intervals and low-spoken voices, had the peculiar flavour of a death watch.

Agnes' hand stole up and she took Sylvester's. It was clammy and limp, she became horror stricken. . . . She felt for both of his and her tears commenced to fall, for she imagined already he was dead . . . But feebly, at the pressure, he opened his eyes—she could

[1]"We are all dead . . . and when not altogether dead, soon dead."

see them under a thin cover of gauze—and stared at her, weirdly, cold. . . .

"Papa . . ." she whispered, a great lump in her throat,—"papa . . . dear . . . do you know me?"

He patted her hand—just the slightest touch of life as if a moth's wing brushed her.

"Come . . . I believe he is dying," she sobbed out loudly, "oh, do come—somebody! . . ."

That was all she remembered.

A priest came, and an acolyte, carrying a chalice for prayer for the dying. The kindly white-gowned nurse came with an orderly . . . a screen was placed around them all, enclosing victim, holy man, little mourner, the white comforters. She prayed, prayed with the priest, until the light—went—out. . . .

And still in this recumbent attitude she failed to hear the holy men depart.

At the front of the hospital several of the Sisters of Mercy and the Mother Superior stood, beside them four doctors, policemen, and numbers of bystanders, all idle, all drawn up with an object in view; the hour was half past three o'clock and the Emperor Franz-Josef was about to make an annual inspection of the Kronprinz Rudolph Spital. When his carriage hove in sight with the white plumes of his *Büchsenspanner*[1] on the box, the doctors commenced to bow and the nurses to curtsy. The bodyguard was the first on the ground, the *Flügeladjutant* followed . . . With all of his eighty-four years, Franz-Josef was not far behind Franzl, Count von Hohenegg. He stepped to the ground with military exactitude, saluted, straightened his body just sufficiently to give him an upright carriage but without ostentatious pomp or the desire to appear impressive. Franz-Josef rather sought to be intimate

[1]originally "gun loader," hunter who accompanied and assisted the emperor *auf der Jagd,* loading his single-shot rifles.

and kindly, benevolent, and he was particularly thoughtful today, the weight of a state tragedy resting on his heart.

When he arrived with the Mother Superior, followed by his suite, on the upper floor, he was met by the priest and acolyte, who had completed their sad duty in the ward and were returning, and he respectfully stepped aside in deference to the Host. Agnes, among the other visitors and the patients, had been warned—"The emperor is approaching . . . His Imperial Majesty has arrived at the hospital for a visit. . . ."

She rose painfully to her feet and waited. Her eyes were fastened on Sylvester's face,—the outside world, majesty, pomp, splendour, duty to emperor and king, lay outside the screen surrounding *him* . . . She heard nothing, saw nothing else. At another time, so close a view of royalty would have filled her with pleasure, she would have been beside herself and have thrilled from tip to toe with the honour and excitement of proximity.

One after another the beds were examined. As the emperor approached, she made a curtsy . . . she did not lift her eyes, her tears were streaming.

"Was fehlt diesem Patienten?"[1] she heard the emperor say; the Mother Superior answered—

"An accident case, brought in a half hour ago . . . fatal, Your Majesty. The patient has just received absolution."

"Who is this child?"

At the inquiry Agnes raised her head. She did so involuntarily, and was so startled that even the emperor turned, thinking an enemy stood behind and he was about to see some dreadful sight! . . . but all he saw was his *Flügeladjutant.* And in the interim

[1]"What ails this patient?"

Agnes had recovered herself, cast down her eyes and waited for the imperial presence to pass.

Franz Meier was in the uniform of an officer of the court.

Franz Meier!

His face was very white, chalk-white . . . It *was* Franz Meier! with kid gloves on his hands, a sash about his shoulder,—the emperor's adjutant!

She thought of the violin he had played for her at the house of the police commissary, with the beautiful Madame Police Commissioner going to get her father out of jail—*through friendship for Franz Meier!* She saw the violin again and the "A" string broken. This time it was the "E" string . . . he had cut it with his own hand—the hand in white kid gloves of the emperor's suite! . . .

She saw only him now, his chalk-white face strained to the point of agony, the wide eyes . . . they grew wider and wider—and faded away into no eyes, swimming together—into a mist . . . coagulated like blood . . . blurred—

Her weight refused to be supported longer and she felt herself sinking to her knees, slowly, which is more painful than to drop all at once, and she gasped and trembled several times, took hold of the bed and slid, all the time trying to hold herself up,—until she collapsed like a sack of clothes, cold, on the floor! . . .

Two nurses saw her and they ran to her, one of them with a glass of water, in order to sprinkle some of the drops in her face . . . This brought her to, but not quickly. Emperor Franz-Josef had seen the child fall, thinking it was due to her great grief. He whispered a gentle word to his *Flügel-adjutant,* who, obedient to the letter, although he was at heart cut to the core, dipped his hands into his trousers' pocket and fished out a golden crown . . . This he laid in her outstretched palm upon the bed,

looking at her all the while with his heart in his eyes. The pathetic smile around her mouth was so touching he had all he could do to keep from lifting her into his arms from the floor, whispering words of comfort into her ear . . . He wanted to be forgiven for being a *Flügeladjutant* and for deceiving her, he who was of the court and not a necktie salesman . . . she should know she was not wilfully lied to—that he had not intended, only at first, to assume a place that was not his . . . Now, he loved her! She was his dearly beloved, and why not forgive him and live with him and be his sweetheart forever and ever? She loved him, he loved her! they were one! . . . only he could not marry her. Court etiquette forbade that. She knew it, everybody of all stations knows, only too well, the class distinctions in Vienna . . . How he loved her! *he loved her! he loved her!!*

But, instead, the imperial visit was over in the ward . . . the emperor and his suite were retiring. He was forced to go. He had to obey, it was his duty . . . Instead—he withdrew himself, regretting each step that was a piece out of his heart,—deserting what was precious and inexpressibly dear to him on that floor to follow his emperor into the gallery . . . down to the private rooms of the establishment. . . .

At the door Franzl stopped and turned his glance back for a last instant. All emotion was concentrated in that one glance . . . then he left. . . . .

And strain as she would, Agnes could see him no longer. He was gone. The man who had taken her little morsel—all in the world she had to offer—from his high station, and now laid coins in her hand, like a beggar . . . he was gone. The great void of the empty doorway, leading into the corridor, alone remained. . . .

XX

BONIFACE!

As a rule there are two types of people, those who love intensely and hate intensely, and those who never do either, running along on an even keel, perfectly placid, emotionless, lazy, indifferent and calm. . . .

Schani Huber belonged to neither one of these types. He was a rule unto himself. He hated with all the venom of a snake wriggling in the meadow and always sure somebody is about to step on him, and, therefore, rearing his head to strike at all occasions . . . He hated Sylvester with an intensity that only culminated with his death at his, Huber's, hands in the afternoon preceding on the Wurstelprater.

Now that the tragedy was over he felt a keen satisfaction. He knew the clown was mortally injured, he had looked out for it that the moment should be right when he climbed up on the roof of Rossreiter's and unfastened with his horny and knotted fingers the steel wires holding the sign of the *Wundersalon* to the creaking and rotted planked building by heavy screws. Having accomplished what he wanted, fate looked out for the rest. Destiny was with him, Sylvester stood directly underneath, while, if he had wanted to kill the hunchback, he would have been disappointed as Bartholomew stepped down from the platform just as the clown went up, just as the sign commenced to sway —just as his spiel was completed.

The grudge that the proprietor of the merry-go-round held against Sylvester had, of course, been that he was the father of Agnes in the first place. He wanted this girl. She worked for him and he felt that he owned her. She was his prey and Sylvester was cheating him

out of her by being her protector and watching him—Huber . . . When the episode came with the pocket-knife in the morning behind the closed canvas flap of his booth and he was about to get what he wanted from the girl,—Sylvester, like the old watchdog that he was,—ripped up his shoulder and would have gotten at his entrails had not the whole Wurstelprater come into the concession just in time. Huber's strength had helped him too . . . he was built like an ox, had wrists the size of pig's hams and muscles that bulged under his coat from work at the *Kraftmaschine* until they made an ordinary professor of gymnastics vomit.

He hated, but he did not know how to love—except himself! Marianka, his wife, was abused, not even decently tolerated in the beginning, and now she had gotten to a point of revenge against him. She watched him, each move, even riled him, dodged his blows, carried some of them with her, and the Wurstelprater knew from its one end where the *Rutschbahn* stood next to the *Panoptikum,* to the other as far as *Venedig in Wien,* what she had to put up with, how her love had turned to loathing, how she despised, feared and would some day revenge herself on the toad who was Schani Huber.

With such a general disposition toward himself, Huber further complicated matters by striking at animals as they passed his booth. He hated dogs, they snapped at him. Cats threw him into a frenzy. He hated all four-footed things, which is a sure sign of a corrupt disposition—one that has cruelty on the surface, is shunned or snarled at by beasts who have a certain intuition. . . .

He had a particular delight for striking at the monkey that was part of the attractions of the *Wundersalon.* He had so far antagonised the young orang-utang, that Boniface forgot every trick he had been labouriously taught by his master, the hunchback,—

left his platform and ran, squealing, at the heels of his tormentor when Huber came within the space of the concession. This put Huber in a good humour all afternoon. He would cackle out his spiel—

"Jen'l'mn, here's your prize Herkalees masheen! Messhur your strength, watcha good for, watcha lift, watcha push . . . how hard k'n y' hit! . . . three cents, a nothin', a nothin' . . ." laughing until tears ran down his hairy cheeks at the ape that chased his own tail in rage or licked his ribs where his cane had whacked the flesh half off the bones.

Boniface waited all day for the return of Sylvester . . . The sign was gathered up, the debris cleared . . . business went on as usual after the accident. What could the concessionaires do? An accident is an accident. Nobody saw the sign pushed down. Nobody saw the hands that unfastened it on the roof, or the body that slid into the alley, which was Huber's . . . Marianka, selling the tickets, wondered why he let the merry-go-round turn for twenty minutes . . . but she did not know the reason; he came down from his own room.

So Huber, who had murdered a man, was perfectly safe. Nobody suspected him. He barked all the afternoon, made faces at the monkey, winked at the girls and drew a holiday crowd. When it was closing time he went upstairs, leaving Marianka to padlock his concessions, drawing the canvas tent around the merry-go-round; and when she came upstairs, ready to drop, he started—

"Got every nick'l of the money with you? Next time come upstairs first . . . gimme the money." . . .

She carried it in her apron. She started to untie the strings.

"C'm on, who th' hell wants t' wait for you . . . I wanna go to bed, think I can sit here all night? . . . D' you know how much money you got here? gimme

every nick'l, I ain't runnin' the shootin'-gall'ry fer nothin' and I wanna know how she come out . . . she ain't doin' much an' if tonight don't show better, I'm gonna kick that Lizzie out . . . she can't run no show o' mine! Stallin' and kiddin' don't do the business. . . ."

She felt like telling him that his own kidding of the girls was about as useless, but kept a discreet silence, glaring at the pile of money that lay before his horny, greedy hands on the table, wherewith she was never to buy herself a single trinket, a dress, a coat, a hat, a shawl to cover her work-a-day body from one season to the next.

"Whatcha lookin' at?"

"Nothing," she retorted.

"Get out!"

He made a motion to lunge himself across the table and strike her, but Marianka glided out of the room.

She had a separate bedroom. They made a storehouse of this second room, filling it in the corners with extra ammunition used in the shooting-gallery, ducks and balls made of wood, clay pipes, prize dolls and souvenirs . . . Another weight-machine was in this room of a different type . . . hit with a mallet, it registered the force of the blow on a scale behind, a device that they did not use because two of these machines did not pay to operate.

Huber's room was used for a workshop and dining-room combined. It was badly furnished. A half dozen bottles of beer were on the table along with sausage and bread. As he counted his money and turned over receipts, he put the sausage and bread into his mouth in large pieces, so that his face, which bulged, looked exactly like his other *Kraftmaschine,* the one downstairs with the enormous empurpled cheeks, beaten from consistent blows of fists. His eyes watered, the juice from his mouth ran into his beard. . . .

"Shee here," he commenced with his mouth full,—"Mar-yanga, ghis rasheet ish ghus' shikshee shen's more zan I can find . . . you're short, I counted the dam' shing shiks timsch now! You c'mere, Mar'yanga, y' hear . . . *du gemeines*. . . ."

"It ain't short," she hollered. "I can't hear a thing you say. Eat an' get through an' then I'll show you."

He leaned back in his chair, "Shay, what th' hell—I'll beat y' brains oudt!"

"Look here, I never cheated you in all my life. You're always pickin' a quarrel, fightin', beatin', some day you'll get yours, Schani Huber—see if you don't!" she shouted, rather unwisely, for Huber took no threats from any woman, particularly his wife. So he leapt to his feet and started to abuse her in round terms, held her by the throat, actually spat in her face, and then released her with a throaty—

"If I wanna eat, I guess I can eat . . . wadda y' know about that?" he grinned diabolically, and looked across from his window into that of Mrs. Rossreiter, where Agnes had returned from the Kronprinz Rudolph Spital and both Bartholomew and the fat woman were consoling her with meek little speeches in the lonely room. . . . "Well, see what 's here!" He went over and put his elbows on the sill, shamelessly inspecting the group. "Wonder what's happened?" he said, curiously.

"Sylvester 's dead . . ." said Marianka, before she thought, for she hadn't intended to speak any more that evening.

"Who th' hell asked you?" he retorted, without turning his face. . . . "H'llo there, monkey!" Boniface was seated on the opposite sill, his chain reaching inside the room to a hook over the frame. "Say, y' want a souvenir, y' dirty little screw-eyed, monkey-doodle saphead . . ." He reached back to his loaf of bread and began to roll tiny hard knots of the dough,

with which he bombarded Boniface. "Ketch that, y' wiggle-faced lout." . . .

The monkey started in to squeal, bringing Bartholomew to the sill—

"Let him alone, Huber . . . you want that monkey t' bite you?"

"Think I care?"

"He will."

"You've told me that a dozen times . . . he ain't bit me yet, has he? He don' know how to bite, he ain't no monkey, he's a son of a bitch anyhow!"

He threw so viciously to punctuate his speech that he caught Boniface below the eye; the monkey let out a shrill cry like a child in pain and leapt at him, bringing his chain out with a clatter and precipitating himself at full length down the side of the building into the alley!

There he hung, extended, dangling to and fro, and screaming at the top of his voice.

"Ha-ha-hahaha!" Huber fell back into the room, laughing until his sides ached. Then he arose and bombarded the poor victim, bringing all his accuracy into play, throwing with the might of his hamlike hands at the swinging target.

"Curse your devilish hide!" Bartholomew drew the little fellow in and felt his chest and forefeet to see if he were injured. . . . "It's a right he'd have t' choke th' life out of you, Schani Huber, an' I hope t' God he does it . . . well, look out, that's all." The fat lady took him in her arms and petted and caressed him, and in another five minutes all was quiet in the Prater park.

Marianka looked at her husband—

"Now, wasn't that a brave thing to—"

"Shut up an' go t' bed," he interrupted.

She did so, undressing herself as she passed into her own room and closed the door.

The windows had shutters on them. The full moon was streaming in to Huber's table where the money lay, so he packed it up, wrapping it in his trousers, and threw it in the corner of his room under his bed. Then, cursing himself for having left his shutters open during the process, he slammed them shut, steadied them so they fitted and dropped the latch into place on the inside. . . .

Having done this, Huber undressed himself, kicking his shoes and coat into one heap, his shirt and socks in another, rinsed out his mouth with the last of the six bottles of beer, let the bottle roll onto the floor and went into his bed. It was an iron bed with small uprights at head and foot, he made it squeak with his weight. He turned over two or three times, spat out into vacancy, hoping his sputum would land somewhere out of his immediate locality, and drew his gray blanket to his chin . . . it was the only covering he had.

Presently he commenced to snore with all his force.

Boniface, who was in the room of the hunchback directly across the alley, did not go to sleep. His master had taken him from Agnes' room into his own and chained him securely, so he lay in an old carpet bag which had a fearful odour, and his little beady eyes seemed to twist 'round and 'round in his head. He was a very human little creature. If man has descended from such *mammalia,* first, the gorilla, then the chimpanzee, then the orang-utang, then the gibbon, which is his farthest remote ancestor, it is not impossible to trace present human attributes in these creatures. . . . Boniface loved where he was loved, and hated too where he was hated,—a far more consistent arrangement than the human, Huber, who could only hate.

Hence, Boniface revolved in his head the two facts: that his friend, Sylvester, was missing, and his enemy, Huber, had inflamed him to the last degree. With more than human cunning he linked the two facts—

one love, the other hatred, and coupled them—a thing no other brain in the Wurstelprater had done.

It sometimes takes animals to teach the higher species sagacity. And Boniface was a very young ape.

He lay in his rags, his eyes facing the moon, his legs bunched up, the ugly, shaggy brows that overhung his eyes and nose gathered into a knot, and thought passed through his brain. When the loneliness of waiting for Sylvester was uppermost, sad cries like moans came out of his mouth. Then Bartholomew cautioned him to be quiet. When his legs began to ache and the end of his tail felt cut off or squeezed by a pair of shears where Huber had stepped on it the previous day, he let out short yelps like barks and got out of his bed so his chain rattled. . . .

"Boniface!" Bartholomew's voice was sharp. But the chain continued to rattle. Soon only Boniface was awake, however,—and then he cautiously got on his feet, raised out of his bed and leaped up on the chair-back beside him, where he stretched to his full height and unhooked the end of his chain from the screw-eye on the wall. Thus prepared, with the end in his own front paw, he lightly sprang to the window sill. The window was wide open, the pane was up . . . soft summer breezes stole through the whispering blossoms and brushed the leaves of the chestnuts together . . . an odour of fresh acacia came up from the semi-stillness.

Boniface let himself slyly out of the window—this time with his chain! He crept hand-over-hand down the wood work of the wall, it was rough and unplastered. He stole carefully to the ground, spanned the alley in four little leaps and stood beneath the opposite wall. Starting to climb this, he resembled a black shadow—he wavered slightly, playing against his background, looking now like a sphinx, now like the scroll-work on cornices, now like a jaguar leaping, and now

just a simple little monkey playing hide-and-go-seek with his own tail on the Wurstelprater. . . .

He got himself up so high—while everybody snored and their breaths wheezed out until they could be heard beyond the boards of their rooms!—that his hand touched the window-sill. He drew up and sat on the ledge . . . Then he ran his little thin paw between the slats of the shutters to the middle where shutters generally latched, and lifted the fastening. Monkeys copy everything and he had seen Batholomew lock his latch from the inside a hundred times in this way.

So he was inside and he dropped to the floor noiselessly. It was his only animal trait . . . Human beings can do nothing in silence. But Boniface avoided the clothes lying in bundles on the floor, leaping over them and the bottles as if by magic; he saw his sleeping foe and the moonlight was a very brilliant torch. So he hopped on the bed and threw his arms around the neck of the hairy occupant, drawing him to him with all his might. . . .

A clock in the steeple of the Prater church struck two!

XXI

MAN IS AN IMITATIVE CREATURE

Guilt is always avenged. The monkey went down the way he came up. He locked the shutters behind him. He fastened himself back on his screw-eye. If he had his liberty, what should he do with it?

This is the same with man. He wants his liberty. *His liberty!* What shall he do with his liberty after he has it? Ask the monkey . . . he will chain himself back on the wall . . . he will go back to servitude, under some other banner, under some other master . . . he is one of a unit and cannot stand alone.

The peasant will want to avoid the army . . . he does everything to avoid his patriotic duty, because he is a farmer and not a murderer. He hates service to an ideal, but he will serve the soil . . . And so the peasants of Sodowa, in Bohemia, which, as a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, sends a certain number of conscripts yearly to the barracks, have evolved a very sly system that serves as an excuse, and frequently they are able to stay out of the army. . . .

Nepomuck Navratil, the valet of the Count von Hohenegg, a peasant, son of peasants, came from Sodowa. He was a plain workman . . . He had to support himself while his father lived; he had to support his mother when his father died. When she died —his mother—he was free . . . He could roam the world. He had nothing to hold him to the soil of Bohemia. He could even join the army, and he should have, but instead he went back to the soil, planting it, reaping it, serving some master, who was the owner, and he was the tenant . . . a free man!

Now, when a man plows the soil he has not got any

education. He reads and writes just a little. If he is a Bohemian, he is stolid. His manners are quiet and sober, he is of the draft-horse type, pushing or pulling to send up a furrow; his nature is quite dependable but his mental resources are limited . . . He is very much like a monkey . . . what he sees, he copies, be it good or ill. He reasons a little, not far nor deeply. His master is his masterpiece, a model, the type after which to regulate his own conduct . . . So a man from Sodowa learns easily, and generally the wrong thing first, as is the case with the ignorant.

Nepomuck had been kicked in the head by a horse when a boy of thirteen. This stroke, which should have been considered ill since it brought on a concussion of the brain,—was instead looked upon by the future candidate to military honours as the best of good fortune. It would keep him out of the army . . . no doctor would pass as fit a man whose head had been cracked open, whose brains were mashed and sense gone—whatever sense he once possessed . . . Nepomuck was radiant—as a boy of thirteen. He did not look forward with any great terror to the time of conscription. He didn't want to do service, and here—like a present from God—was the horse's kick! It stunned him. He was delighted. As soon as his head healed, he danced and sang . . . and so seven years passed and he was one year away from the time when his friends would have to go to the war and he could stay at home—in service to the soil, his master—and be saved from the necessity of learning to kill anyone, an enemy of one colour or another. . . . He pitied all his friends.

"Why, I don't have to go," he said, "I am unfit."

"How do you know?—your head is healed," they taunted him, who taunted them.

"But no doctor will pass me!"

"Wait and see . . "

He commenced to get nervous. Supposing his head

were healed and the *Assentierung*[1] would actually pass him . . . he would be drafted and made to shoot, to pack a pack, dig a grave, his own most likely, as he could never stand it—and get his legs and arms blown off. . . .

These are the thoughts of every peasant in Sodowa, but they are not all as ingenious as this Nepomuck Navratil thought he was. . . .

When the idea that he *might* be taken finally filled his head and he saw himself with one year to think it over, he commenced to save, earning each day, putting aside all he could. He had heard of a doctor whose name was Moritz Ohrenschmaltz. He was the regimental surgeon, a Jew; he knew how to get men out of the army. For money anything could be done, and he divided his profits with the *Stabsartzt*[2], Christian by name, but a rank cheat all the same. If Nepomuck saved enough money and took it to this man, he would arrange with the *Stabsartzt*. . . . They had a device, it was made to get men out of the service, but they had to pay! So Nepomuck saved . . . he denied himself everything. He bought no shoes and stockings, went around in his old things, sold his horse, bought simple food that he was always accustomed to anyway,—lived a very secluded life, knew nothing about young women, of whom he was as shy as the army routine! . . . and, in short, by the time the year was up, the Sadower had sufficient money, so he went to the *Assentierung,* when he was sent for, with a very light heart.

The scheme was this: the recruit came, Dr. Moritz Ohrenschmaltz looked him over. If he put his hand to his mouth and whispered into the doctor's ear that he was entirely unfit for military duty and the doctor found he wasn't, the recruit took out his money and laid it in a convenient place where it could be found by the

[1]examining board.
[2]staff doctor.

doctor, who put cheese in his ear to cause a running sore. The ear festered, it looked like an abscess. . . . When the recruit came before the *Stabsartzt* and Christian saw the running ear, he promptly set him back one year, taking the hint of the regimental surgeon to keep him on the payroll of the medical branch as a little side income. . . . Each year the peasants' sons came in droves, the graft was paid over, the ears were kept running and the word "Untauglich" was set behind their names, which means unfit. . . .

But the second year Nepomuck Navratil was not so fortunate. He was out of work. The crops had been poor, the weather against the soil, and he found himself nearing the *Assentierung* for the second time with no money to establish a running ear. . . . He became frantic. He determined to tell the doctor that he *would* earn, *would* pay him.

Dr. Ohrenschmaltz was indignant at the very suggestion. *Would* pay him, would *bribe* him! There is a very great difference between *would* and would. He was no grafter, what did the peasant think? He had done it last year? he must be crazy! . . . Where was his money—nowhere? How could he say such a thing —*without money!* And so Nepomuck was inducted into the army, *tauglich ohne Gebrechen.*[1]

His knees shook; he was too frightened to lift an arm or a leg. In the army? good God! The next move was: where should he be assigned? He was used to horses . . . he went into the cavalry. . . . The regiment was called the Sixth Dragoons, under Prince Windischgrätz. . . . It was a renowned and remarkable regiment. If he had chosen one out of the whole Austro-Hungarian army, he could not have joined a more aristocratic unit! . . . But Nepomuck was not an aristocrat. . . . The fine brass buttons and highly

[1]fit without flaw.

glossed boots could not interest him, except to shine the boots and the buttons. He was a very good servant, obedient, docile and mum. His silence was so great he was the butt of the regiment, taking cuffs and blows, returning none, often feeling the lash when some officer had a falling out with his light o' love and did not know whom to burden with the punishment of the quarrel . . . The prince struck him, his captain struck him, his lieutenant, his sergeant, his corporal. . . . If there had been any other degree in the army that could possibly afford wrath, Nepomuck Navratil would have received the blows. . . .

And so, finally, when he was on the verge of suicide, not brave enough to accomplish it and not clever enough to stay out of the officers' way, he was taken up in a hayloft by a drunken second lieutenant, who had sadistic tendencies, and beaten into a half-jelly. . . .

This crime came to the notice of his captain. . . . The captain was Franzl, Count von Hohenegg, who demanded an explanation, found out the standing of his *Wojak*[1] and took him into his own service to save the poor peasant's soul. He was astounded at the man's abuse; he saw the red welts all over his body at the bathing pool, and it touched him so deeply, he immediately arranged to pay eight *gulden* monthly to his government, placed a red "V" on the conscript's sleeve, which gave him a standing in the community, made him a private valet and taught him service without the sword-knot. . . . This was well accomplished. Nepomuck became a *Putzer,* which means shiner, an officer's orderly. He didn't have to practice arms as a continuous diet, only to fight in time of war, and shine buttons and shoes to his heart's content.

This just suited him. How he loved that red "V"! How meek and subservient he was at once! How he loved his master. . . .

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[1]army patois for soldier.

The peasant who wants his freedom is only happy when he gets his slavery again . . . monkey-like . . . fastening his chain back on the screw-eye after he had carried it off in his hand. . . .

Cigars, perfume, wines—all the things which the Count von Hohenegg had in abundance, that formed a part of his household and life, all his civilian servants, became a part of the property of Nepomuck Navratil when he became in turn the property of his master. He used as much perfume as he liked, squirted it all over the place, commanded the servants, went about with his master's cigars, drank his wines,—and in general became as overbearing as the ignorant can ever get, wearing a uniform! Fear left him, society pleased him. Franzl forgave him everything for his early sufferings. He was a changed man. Only on one point was he as shy as ever: he did not dare to look at a woman who was likely to return his affection.

Now this last was about to be changed. Nepomuck, who had never been in love, fell in love. He saw a human being in the same position, practically, in which he suffered so keenly...—a woman, she was being beaten, cowed. He took the count's flowers and candies to Agnes Urban on the Wurstelprater and in delivering them came to the merry-go-round. A woman sat there in a wooden cage, she had sad eyes, she was being hounded... the man who hounded her was the big brute that stamped around, cursed her, gave her a beating, he thought. And so Nepomuck was in love. He was going to rescue this woman... he must see her, he went down to the Prater again.

Twice before he had been there. Once when two men in his same regiment coaxed him to go out for the purpose of seeing how he would act in a dance-hall. When he came there, five women asked him to dance. He bought a little beer, the women chucked his chin, they asked for more beer... he wasn't accustomed to

spending, and so they left him, cursing him in the *Fünf-Kreuzertanz*[1] of the Prater. . . Then he returned to his mare, a soft-nosed animal with a velvety mouth that he rode in manœuvers... He was almost in love with his mare! She never found fault with his hair-cut or his nose. The hair was cut in the villainous style of the lowest classes, butchered into an "M" from the front with the triangle coming down on the nose; and his nose was a special nose, bumpy at the end with a large lump like a little cantaloupe. . . .

Outside of this he had no special characteristic except his recent arrogance, grown up like a mushroom out of fetid soil. But he drew twelve *hellers* per day in wages and the balance in tips from his count, wore *Pomade Hongroise* on his brown hair which made the hair-cut look still more noticeable, even spread out thin, copied his master and was now on the Prater, holding a box of flowers under one arm, not from "Fossati's," but some less fashionable florist—perhaps the flower girls before the Stephansdom—and seeking Mrs. Marianka Huber the day after Sylvester Urban had died, his daughter had returned to her lodging above Rossreiter's and the monkey, Boniface, had let himself out of the window and gone visiting next door. . . .

Boniface scrambled back in. What he left behind was a corpse, not a man. Guilt had been avenged, Schani Huber climbed to Heaven with the mark of a beast at his throat, only the mark was scarcely visible, as it had been done by two furry arms, softly strangling him in the dead of night behind closed shutters . . . and when Marianka found her husband in the morning, Boniface had vanished, leaving no traces, the dead body lay very stiff and unnatural, the tongue coming out of the mouth and the eyes from the head—and Schani Huber was on his way to Heaven—or hell.

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[1]five-cent dance-hall.

Marianka was the only one inside the house with Huber. The shutters were locked, no human hand was small enough to unfasten the latch from the outside... she must be guilty! All the Prater knew she hated the bearded despot... Marianka was taken from the Wurstelprater by the police for having murdered her husband while he slept, and was lodged in jail.

Thus—when Nepomuck came into the merry-go-round, she was just being hustled out... He gave her the flowers, he looked his sympathy, and he learned all about the end of Huber, so he knew she was a widow . . .

His romance had commenced, but he thought it had ended very abruptly.

XXII

"WHEN LOVE DIES..."

The most remarkable part of all the preliminaries of the world-war consisted in the month of silence that followed the death of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. A month of silence! Who was active during this time? The minister of war in Vienna for one person—von Steinbrueck... Other diplomats, most likely, German, French, Russian. . . .

But in von Steinbrueck alone was the interest centered for his daughter, the Countess Gisella, as she planned two very noteworthy things. To allow the death of the Austro-Hungarian heir to interfere with these was not in her nature. Gisella was reckless. She had determined to throw over society and she did so with a vengeance.

She commenced by announcing her birthday party, a gala affair—a ball that would have taken place with the presence of the court—if the court had not been in mourning. So she gave it all the same. She was, in fact, stimulated by the volcano upon which the nation sat. That was in her nature. Volcanoes she approved. Consequently, when she decided on the party, Gisella knew, as it was July 22nd, that she could give her party now or never... tomorrow Europe would be at war! But she gave it as a quiet function which was on the same footing as a little private orgy would have been. Papa was there, taking a glass of *Chateau Lafitte* between chats with the foreign minister and ambassadors from Germany and Russia. . . Franzl was invited—

"My God, how can you think of such a thing now...

just after, just after...." he stammered over the telephone in shocked surprise as his little betrothed urged him to accept the invitation the night before.

"Franzl, your scruples are really pathetic," she responded. "Why, every woman of the circle will be here."

This gave away the entire underlying feeling of those ladies who were supposed, by virtue of their stations as the wives and daughters of the highest nobility of the empire, to be the example of those lower down. They were supposed to be nobly inclined, but they harboured more petty jealousies and less scruples than any little country girl on the Wurstelprater. They were jealous of the Duchess Hohenberg. She was Bohemian and just an ordinary lady-in-waiting and she became the prospective empress. Hence, when the assassin's bullets laid her low, Europe might have mourned, the whole world latterly to quake,—but the ladies of the Vienna court thought it was a time for jubilee, cats as they were . . . .

"You mean you are going to celebrate your birthday——"

"And several other things as well," she added. "For instance, this is the end—of a lot of things..." She meant she knew that the morrow held an ultimatum to Serbia and that war, a punitive expedition, would follow the ultimatum. Court functions could not resume... "Now or never." . . .

"Good God!"

"You said that before, Franzl... Now, tragedy aside, you know the feeling of the court—the underlying, well, you know, my dear boy, you know... Come, this little affair is really for the purpose of saying good-bye——"

"To flaunt your disregard for court etiquette."

"To say good-bye to it... All right, say that is true... are you shocked? You know my nature...."

"You go too far."

"Come and see."

"If I thought that every woman of the court would be present and that you really went through this mad thing for the purpose of feeling the teeth of the sentiment, I would come...."

"Don't give me any such altruistic purpose as proving anything. I'm taking the opportunity, I'm dancing before the flood gates... I'm announcing my retirement from society... I am going to have some interesting news for you."

"You paralyze me!"

"*Apres moi*..... Come and be seen...don't fail, I expect you."

He went. This "*apres nous*" attitude was too much the vogue in Vienna. Let the rabble sink,—laugh and be merry!

Gisella was utterly self-centered. She thought probably the world could not get on without her; or she knew it could and didn't care. She was insolent enough to say, when she greeted him in a private *salon* off the ballroom,—"This is our last chance."

Seeing the halls filled with nobility all assuming the same viewpoint, he returned:

"Will the proletariat spree while the crests sink?" . . .

She raised a quizzical eyebrow—

"That sounds like social democracy. There will come a time when they can try out their guns—and shoot at one another."

"War?..."

"Tomorrow." . . .

Von Steinbrueck was never able to keep a dangerous secret from his daughter. She never betrayed them—where they could do harm.

The volcano was, indeed, close. Franzl's face became grave. He was more shocked at her levity, and those about her, than ever.

"I think it's a good thing to send every man off with a smile on his lips, is it not so? Come, you are not *lustig*[1]...you don't expect I am a saint when tomorrow there will be nothing to laugh at..."

"You said you had no altruistic motives in giving this affair."

"Only one. Toward you. Franzl, we are illy suited. You love etiquette and play with democracy. I love democracy and play with etiquette. *Nun,* when the proletariat sprees, I've determined to be out of the way... I'm going to Venice, friend. . . ."

"When is that?"

"We'll discuss it on the dance-floor. We engaged ourselves dancing, we'll disengage after the same formula. Come, my friend, little Franzl, *lustiger Wiener!* I'm twenty-four years old tonight and have a will of my own...it's a bad will. It wills to suit itself and the devil be damned. . . This is apropos, they're playing *'Quand l'Amour Meurt'*[2]...." she led the way on to the dance floor. He protested—

"I don't understand you at all?"

"You will... and take it lightly." She forced him to dance with her—"I saw you go 'on duty'—with a sweet little passionate thing... she looked rather seedy, Franz, —on the Stephansplatz... a seedy girl with beautiful eyes, Franz! Who was she?..."

He commenced to protest—

"When was that?"

"Yesterday... day before... you hired a *Fiaker,* you stepped in, gave her a smile—maybe a kiss! did you?... and the *Fiaker* drove off. I was behind you, followed you to Obere Augartenstrasse, No. 14... you see what a beastly memory I've got! Saw you get out, she got out... in you went, she went in!" Her eyes darkened as they waltzed automatically, surrounded with couples

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[1]merry.

[2]"When Love Dies . . . "

—"and no excuses, please. What for? Surely you don't care, and I—ah-ha-ha! there isn't anything dramatic in this!.... Franz, I'm not jealous... the charming uniform you wear doesn't thrill me as it would her, she loves you, no doubt. My neck and shoulders are not the nudity she gives to you in her rags. Well, then, say that we are happy to finish with each other, good friends but impossible lovers...."

He felt his heart plunge and his face grow pale.

"Why take it tragic? You used to be a perfect dancer," she taunted him: "you are falling out of step, my dear...."

"Gisella, have you considered what you are doing?"

"That sounds pedantic, parental... have I considered? No. Consideration is the worst hypocrisy on earth. I don't love you, my friend....is that news? You knew you had your wild oats,—I? I had nothing. So I fell in love—with somebody else. It's an excusable luxury. I haven't grown old, but it's time to matriculate... the college course takes four years. If you're not dead, your love is. Nothing lasts.... that sounds like social democracy, and tomorrow the lid blows off! I told you —I shall be in Venice...."

"Does von Steinbrueck sanction this?"

"He has national crises; he can't consider his daughter at home."

"You chose this hour——"

"This night. He will be at the ministry, and I don't mind telling you—your bird will have flown tomorrow." . . .

"And with whom, may I ask?"

"That—" she said, and the music stopped... she stood perfectly still: "my stable groom, if you will... *que sais-je?*" she whispered. . .

It was a part of her daring and audacious character that she always threw out the truth to feel it smart. She liked to humiliate him. Her stable groom! But Franzl

did not consider the likelihood of this degradation for a moment.....

"Well, my dear," he commenced, leaving the floor with her,—"if you feel that way, *I* can say nothing. I am only——"

"The Count von Hohenegg, who loves ladies by the score! Who thought it a sport to steal other men's wives, if they pleased his eye, and sisters, if they had virtue to lose... You ran, romped, threw kisses, played with women's hearts the very devil! as if they were baubles to hang around your own neck, and all the time you never thought what the women went through when you men—your kind—throw them over. They take you seriously and you sport and play... all right. But when the thing comes home to you, you shrink and smart.

"*Nun,* this is the size of it: I'm finished playing the betrothal act with you, my friend. I have had about all I can stand. You've had a hundred and one affairs, it's fun, it's sport. . . now legends end. You are free again. Go where you like, when you like... I'm not heartbroken, I want to be free. I don't want to marry you and I never did want to. There's no tragedy in that; only come into the conservatory and we'll play the last act—like good fellows."

She went out with a sarcastic air and brought him to a rockery of ferns where there was a tiny buffet hidden in one corner. She stooped and took out a bottle that was labeled "*Chateau Yquem,* vintage 1876." . . .

Franzl, who could hardly control himself enough to follow and who felt as if he were suffocating in a sealed coffin, his uniform collar too tight, the medals over his heart lifting and falling with the action of the organ, watched her white, shimmering arms as they filled two glasses rapidly from the bottle... She was in deep *décolleté* and her long train circled about her like a serpent. "Here's to love!" she said.

"And what will people say?" he gasped.

She halted her glass at the point of her lips—

"Hang the people—your people, as well as *your* traditions and *your* codes of honour! I'm through with them... I want to live my life as *I* see fit to live it... and you live yours..." her eyes glittered—"and if I fail, I'll have at least the consolation that the fault was mine. Drink and be merry!"

She emptied the glass, and then in almost cynical fashion, stripped his engagement ring from her finger and held it out to him. . .

"Here is your promise back... Now you can go to war,—I presume you will,—free, free as the birds in the air. Time is precious, make the most of yours... as for me— . . " She stretched her arms over her head and threw her face up, laying her palms on her highly flushed cheeks. . . "traditions are in my blood, my friend... the von Steinbruecks have been reckless for generations. I would have made you a poor wife. . . This way—life will find me poor in thanks if I do not live it to the fullest.

"When we crossed the canal—the day you drove with your little woman in rags to your assignation over the Ferdinandsbrücke—there was a peasant who threw herself into the river. She drowned and did not deserve to be fished out, because she did not know how to live life... When we live, we love, and when we waste our lives, we die. . . Oh, I want to live—to live, and life is very sweet... The parting is not half as bad when you have enjoyed the moments together. That was the matter with us, Franzl, we never were lovers, we were poorly matched... propinquity brought us together, the bore of courts, the narrow, hemming-in attitude which sets every action into place like the pawns in a chess game. . . "

She smiled whimsically—

"You are not taking this to heart? Don't. It takes

the poor to love—we are surfeited... we hear flatteries from the cradle and become corrupt from the time our ears are opened by nurse-maids' catheters and the pearls our mother wears around her throat because she's too damned lecherous to take them off!

"That's reputation for you! what will people think, not what is being handed down to us. So I go on and find love in my own way, in the manure or the heavens... the cock crows, the sun rises—the lark sings, it goes down! what is there to life?"

Silence for a moment. . .

The dance ended and was followed by new music.

"There, you hear that? Presently I will be called upon to dance again. I must preserve my reputation and twenty-three men are waiting for my hand in twenty-three dances, one for each birthday... you had the first. My reputation is established by holding a jubilee at a mourning court. There's no hypocrisy about being brazen... As for the other reputation, carried on by gossip, it can suffer. What is that to me now?"

"Absolutely nothing?!" he thought.

"We were made to shock or be shocked... Here comes my second birthday."

A little lieutenant, wiping the perspiration from his forehead and with his dance card in his hand, came into the conservatory. A *Mosesdragooner!*[1] . . . Franzl's lip curled. He made him a formal bow—

"Your pardon," said the little soldier, "we have a dance, I believe?"

"Yes...naturally," responded Gisella... "I am asking the count's permission..." With that she stretched out her hand, which Franzl kissed formally, and a cynical smile crossed his face as they left for the ballroom arm in arm.

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[1]slurring way of referring to men of the train and transport service, because so many Jews served under this branch unable to be admitted to the cavalry.

XXIII

LILAC!

Well, he was free. . .

It was ten o'clock.

He was on the street before Gisella's house.

He had taken the precaution, when the humour of the situation struck him, after he slipped the engagement ring into his pocket, to take a second glass of the *Chateau Yquem*. . . The vintage was old. If it had been greener he would have been more satisfied with the effect... Now Franzl, making himself invisible by going out of the conservatory to the hall and into the small anteroom where he found his things, managed to make an exit from the house, the strains of Lehar's *"Wein, Weib und Gesang"*[1] following him out of doors.

He thought over his past. Gisella had awakened a strange current of recollection—she with her *Lebenslust*[2] and desire to suck life from nature's bosom to the last dregs. This fountain was inexhaustible... she had chosen a deep well.

He was undecided which way to proceed, having no destination. His uniform, the gala uniform of formal entertainments, with its long cloak, lacking boots, the dancing spurs at his heels, seemed incongruous on a walking man. Still he wanted to walk and think over in the silence his emotions of the last hour. . . .

A *Fiaker* passed and the driver hailed him, but he shook his head and went on, lighting a cigarette.

His past life! Why was he responsible for a condition that existed in every man's life in the court that he knew? Rudi had stupid affairs, Nicki ran with every

[1]"Wine, Woman and Song."

[2]insatiable desire for a fast life.

subaltern's daughter, Eitel was the worst and had warped tendencies besides. The war minister, the minister of public instruction, the colonel of his regiment, Prince Windischgrätz, who had two duels on his hands, —they were all like this! playing at love, always fancying a real passion and never going beneath the surface of their silk shirts. . .

Franzl reviewed his life from his earliest real memory, the year when he was fourteen and on his first vacation from military school. He was at the academy at Villaneustadt and came home without announcing it to his parents, either mother or father. . . His father was out. His mother was at home, but he went right upstairs, as if he were still a small boy, and ran into her apartments. . . Here he was met by a strange sight, not at all strange at first,—but presently he perceived that she, the Countess of Hohenegg, who was sitting on a tall gold *fauteuil,* one of his favourite chairs for the dreaming state as a child, and had only a very sheer negligee costume on, *sat very high*... much higher than he ever sat on this chair.

It took him a moment to comprehend the reason. He was not slow. His wits came to his rescue, and he backed out of the room as he had come, only without his mother's name on his lips... And from that time he was accustomed to looking at her with his eyes lowered.

He went to sleep that night, drawing himself under the covers and intending to read a light story to divert his mind. The chambermaid came in to ask him if he wanted fruit, peaches, grapes, or cigarettes. . . She was a new chambermaid. One that he had never seen before. Franzl observed that she was looking at him rather strangely and he thought it was because of the secret he discovered upstairs... This was not the case. The maid knew there was a strange man in his mother's room, but she did not know that he knew it. But when

she turned her back, he cried, and his imagination was fired.

His father was *Oberstallmeister* at the *Marstall*[1] and many times did not return home at all, remaining away for days, when it was given out that he was with the emperor at Ischl or *auf der Jagd*... But at length he returned, fatigued, and slept a whole day and night. Not long after his return from military school, the accident happened that cost his father's life. The event was the Parforce Hunt[2]. His horse, a very fine stallion, slipped at a barrier and fell to his knees, throwing his rider over his head. If the count had been in physical condition to endure fox-chasing, he would have come out of the chase with his own life as well as the fox's... Fatigue, lack of rest, exhaustion from many causes unseated him; he went over the barrier on his neck and unhinged his spine so that he died without a single audible recollection and on the instant!

This news was brought to the *Grafin* von Hohenegg. She fainted. Then she recovered and smiled. . . She was a tall woman, willowy, quite slender and as pale as a Madonna. She always wore her blond hair *á la* Empress Elizabeth, which meant wound about the head in two braids, and the deep shadows under her eyes gave her a tragic and questionable look. . . She danced with grace, was very lithe, and at court the best horsewoman that ever mounted a saddle. . .

With these recollections, Franzl found his cigarette out and his mind heavy. His feet turned up a quiet street. He continued to walk and ponder... Mali was the chambermaid's name who brought his mother the news.

The same night she came into his room. She wanted to ask him if he had finished his reading, and brought him a French book... It was full of pictures. He read

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[1]Colonel Stablemaster in charge of the imperial and royal stables.
[2]cross country fox chasing.

a little French, his education along that line was bound to be limited. Cadets seldom read, but they had a fund of stories which they always told. He was not old enough for this. . . He was surprised when Mali sat down on his bed.

"What will my mother say?" he asked her.

"Don't be silly!" she replied.

He was—very silly.

She was Parisian trained.

He went back to the academy. Came back Christmastime. His mother had a middle-aged friend visiting with her, the handsomest woman he had ever seen. Without preamble she commenced, when she saw him:

"What a very fine son you have, to be sure!"

She spoke to him in a corner of the room alone. He was invited to call on her. He went. She had a large house, more servants than they, and kept a special butler who did nothing but assure the privacy. . . .

Franzl, returning to the military school this time, had a page of his life behind him. He blotted it very carefully so it should never blur. He kept the record so he could refer to it occasionally with pride. See what he had accomplished, and so forth. . . Now the years flew around, he became seventeen, fell in love with a little actress of the Stadttheatre, who taught him more sophistication than all his seventeen years together! She was a former acquaintance of the German ambassador, had been to Nice and Monte Carlo and received a ring in a bouquet of flowers from the prince of Monaco, dancing in the latter resort. . . .

When all this history came out, Franzl was enchanted. He sat up all night listening to it and slept, in consequence, completely through the day. He thought he should go mad for love of this woman before he reached his twentieth year, but by that time had forgotten her name and existence and those of sixteen others.....

Now he was mustered out of school on the emperor's birthday; August 20th, two days later, his mother died. He became master of the estates in Galicia, the owner of a fine home there which he never visited, the home in Vienna with fourteen servants, and his title, his position at court, vexacious memories, further affairs with women who came from the theater, the cabaret, the court and the brothel.... He was never quite happy, always pursued with flowers and souvenirs, or pursuing, getting less enthusiastic with each foray, and shrugged his shoulders more often, day by day, laughed without mirth, grew cynical, gay, but not boisterous. . . And the engagement with the Countess Gisella von Steinbrueck was to culminate all this and now it culminated at nothing!

He stood on the street. A second cigarette did not suit his taste. He felt flat, like stale beer, alone, and he had something else on his conscience.

Tomorrow would be war,—at least, the preparation. Who knew what would happen tomorrow. Tonight he had an excuse, a very good one, in this uncertain excitement, to get a load off his mind that troubled him for three weeks. He would go down to the Prater.

Franzl hailed a *Fiaker* and went directly to his own residence, which was not far. His *portier* slept, he roused him, and ordered the *Fiaker* to wait. Upstairs Spitzbub greeted him with short barks. This was an unaccustomed hour for Franzl to come home. . . Spitzbub yapped at his knees, ran across his room, came back with something in his mouth which he tore with puppy insistence, shaking it like a rat, throwing it up, catching it, trampling it with his four feet. . . .

Franzl stooped and picked it up. It was the little lady doll he had won at the shooting gallery on the Wurstelprater and the dog had almost reduced it to rags.

"Now, see here," he gave him a severe look, "where

did you get that? I never left that on the floor... did you get it off my dresser? Come here... you're a damned lowbrow cur to do a thing like that, Spitzbub, and for two cents I'd give you the beating of your life." . . .

He was much incensed. Looking at the doll gravely, he could only reproach himself and sent for his *Bursche*.

"Excellency?" said Nepomuck, entering the room.

"What the hell do you allow Spitzbub to get into my things for? He was up on my dresser, took this thing off the table or somewhere. . ."

"Herr Rittmeister, melde gehorrrrrr-smst———"[1]

But Franzl interrupted him: "It was not on the floor!"

"Your excellency threw it down..."

"I? Never! You're a damned idiot!"

He gave him a resounding cuff....

"Now, get out my civilians—the gray suit, take these things..." he handed him helmet, gloves and cloak, which he took automatically, nursing his jowl.... Franzl laid the remnants of the doll carefully in his upper dresser drawer, patting them and placing a silk scarf over. . . He took his brushes from the valet's hands in an absent-minded fashion and commenced to brush his hair.

His thoughts remained on the Wurstelprater. He dressed rapidly, took his cane, gloves, soft hat, left by slamming doors, threw himself into the cab and ordered the cabby to drive like blazes in hell to the Aspernbrücke. Here they crossed and continued along the Praterstrasse, ending up under the viaduct, past *Venedig in Wien* and before the concessions, still alive, still blazing with lights, smell, confusion, exhausting chatter, jabber, ringing of hand bells, steam whistles,

[1]"Captain, I most obediently report——"

the thunder of the *Rutschbahn* and the shots from the shooting gallery. . .

Agnes was not in the Rossreiter booth. It was eleven o'clock... she must be upstairs. He looked up, undecided, everything was dark and still. If she were there, she slept. He did not want to find her sleeping,—got a sudden inspiration and went out into the Prater Park. There she sat, hands folded in her lap, crying a little. He went up to her at once.

"Agnes..."

She started and looked at him.

"Let me sit by you... I am sorry—listen. I have no words to tell you how sorry I am. . ."

"Did it take you all this time to make up your mind to tell me so?" she said quietly. He saw the tears were on her cheeks and in her lap was a little object, with hands and feet, like a man, and a piece fallen out of the mutilated cheek. He smiled strangely. Just a trick of fate—but he had the lady doll in his hands a few moments ago! "I suppose you would have liked to lead me on a little longer, to see me—suffer. . . But it's all right....."

"I hadn't the courage to come sooner. But tonight something happened. The Countess Gisella von Steinbrueck, to whom I was engaged for court reasons—you understand how those things go,—sent for me and gave me my ring back. I'm not engaged."

"You never told me you were," she reminded him coldly.

"But—Oh! my God, can't you forgive me? Agnes, please forgive me. . ."

"Why, what does such a noble gentleman like you care whether I forgive?"

"But I do!... I didn't mean to lie. I meant it as a joke at first... until I cared,—and then it was too late to tell. I feared I'd lose you."

"Well, you did. But what's that to you? There are lots more who'd fall for it...."

"But I love you, Agnes..."

"Like you sold neckties?"

"Please forgive me."

"Did I not believe enough yet to suit his excellency, Count von Hohenegg, engaged to Countess von Steinbrueck?"

"But I am not; I told you, she broke the engagement... and this time I'm telling you the truth."

Her glance, coming from vacancy, accosted his now, questioning, and the lids were heavy with pain—

"Why?" her lips barely formed the word. . .

"Because she saw me with you on the Stephansplatz."

This caused her to smile—"Really? She broke her engagement? Then there are other hearts that suffer. I suppose you told her I was a princess. Well, what about it if you are—free? What's that to me?....." She started to her feet.

"No, no, don't go!"

"I am not *so* much of a fool to think that you—such a noble man—would marry *me,* a little guttersnipe."

"But, Agnes, I can—I can—will, keep you, make it nice for you if you will just be mine... I would do anything for you, anything...."

He rose and held out his hands.

"No," she said, shaking her head. "It is final. I love another... I knew him as a necktie salesman, he made me love him, and I loved... He died three weeks ago and I've buried him... he's in my heart, livin', breathin',—he'll keep on, and nobody—not even you—can take him out."

Her voice, heavy with emotion, dissolved in tears. Her footsteps started to retreat. He followed her, laying pleading hands on her shoulder, her shawl. . .

"No...I'll walk alone."

"Forgive me," he whispered, "forgive me..." his voice hoarsened, *"forgive me, Agnes...."* It was a last appeal, like a wail.

She continued to retreat, and he went back to his bench and sank down, taking his head in his hands. . .

She stopped when she had reached the Prater gate with the lilac bushes on both sides... A spray of the perfumed flowers washed her cheek... she broke it off, pressing it to her lips impulsively, and crept back, laying it on his knees and disappearing again before he was aware she had come. . . .

XXIV

AFTER THE BALL...

Gray dawn is the real clandestine hour of the night. A midnight has the life of a nation in full swing—the night life, but gray dawn sees only the remnants of food from a banquet on a table, or empty bottles and full ash trays from the cigars that filled rooms with smoke only a few hours before. . .

The minister of war left his home fifteen minutes after Franzl, drinking a last cup of some strong liquor, went to the German ambassador's house and did not return, going directly to his ministry with his full dress suit on in the morning, covered by a long cloak. He was not seen during the day, he returned at nightfall. It was a very empty house. All the servants had been sleeping and the effects of the night previous were gone... With these effects was Gisella. Now, having established her reputation as a gamester who diced with life on the top of a volcano, she proceeded to throw herself inside.... She left word with her maids to be allowed to sleep until four o'clock in the afternoon, closing her eyes, supposedly, at four in the morning, after the little orgy was over, her guests had left, the twenty-fourth dance of her twenty-four birthdays had been accomplished to the tune of *"Die Fledermaus,"*[1] and she was prepared to fly. . .

So she laid herself in bed, throwing her elegant finery over chair and floor indiscriminately—it was the last time she would wear this ballgown, go or stay, one wearing sufficed—and pretended to sleep, held her eyelashes down just as long as she could stand it, then, hearing nothing, not even a cricket, she rose and threw

[1] "The Bat"—comic opera.

her covers back, displayed herself without gown or sheet, like a sylph, and started to dress from the bottom up. . .

When she got to the top she wore a dark gray traveling suit. It fitted her form like bottles fit corks, it displayed her quite as charming as she was, with her blond hair, in the crimson ball-gown of the night before—a colouring that might almost have been called "shudder"—and she put on a black silk hat, shorter than a man's on the top and with a wider brim, a stiff hat, and slung her pouch across her shoulder down to the opposite hip, like a chamberlain's sash. . .

Gisella's little feet were in walking brogues. She had a fox for her neck, a veil over her face, lashes so long that they compromised the veil. Her white collar around the neck of her gray suit was English, like the shape of her suit, but, being made in Vienna, a woman's outdoor and traveling suit, it was better tailored and more chic.

In order to dress she lit her lamps, drawing her shades. She moved about cautiously. She was very particular about her facial charm, having a very ravishing face, and the greater part of the Countess Gisella's preparations were taken up with eyeing herself askance in the long *trumeau,* as she never looked at anything from the front directly... This gave her a sentimental look but one also very questioning and bold. It is strange, to look with sophistication is to look veiled. A bold glance is not given with the full eye or the lifted lid. . .

She now had her bags to pack. There were two. One was completely filled. The other had only the articles to which she was accustomed, to go in—with which she was improving an appearance already beyond any possible addition to the charms born by nature there. . . These articles came off the table: powders, rouges, lip pomades, a calendar, a prayer book, Boc-

caccio's *Decameron,* a book she could not part from, her crucifix, a rabbit's foot, and, lastly, she examined her jewels.

Her jewel case was oval, standing on three legs like a little gold coffin and lined with purple satin... She took up and counted over the brooches, tiara, collarets of pearls and a thin, almost invisible band of gold that clasped her neck on state occasions, hanging a gigantic blue diamond right where her throat met the channel of her two breasts, one of the largest and most valuable stones in any private collection of Austria. She had, in all, forty pieces of jewelry, rings, ear-ornaments, cuff-links for her riding suits, diamond belt-buckles, shoe-buckles, a disturbing number of hair ornaments, garter fastenings, anklets, watches and bracelets. . . .

She slipped them all into a chamois bag which she dropped into her bosom, snapped the catches of her bags and was about to leave the room when she recalled she had not taken anything to smoke. With this, everything was set down. She opened her humidor, took out a dozen fine cigars and slipped them on top of the prayer book, into the bag.

This chamber she was quitting was the most refined imaginable. It was off her dressing-rooms and lounge, a commodious state bed-room, formerly occupied by the Princess Königsgrätz, her aunt.... Now the princess was dead, her mother was dead,—the whole wing of the second floor, having complete comfort in fifty or more ways, belonged to her.

She was leaving all this.

Her heart stood still, she laughed then caustically at her qualms. If democracy were in the wind, democracy she would eat, drink, sleep and absorb. *Democracy!* She had chosen the morning of the day to decide the fate of Europe in escaping from her bondage in the environment she knew all her life, was born in, was

tired of, anxious to dispense with for a tilt with passion. And she knew, as von Steinbrueck knew, that the word going out to the smaller neighbour of the greater state —Austro-Hungary—was an ultimatum, would be received by eleven o'clock in the morning and would mobilize two armies. . .

War only with Serbia was expected. Serbia, who had won the Balkan war. Serbia, whose armies were just now cocky. Serbia, whose provinces, Bosnia and Herzegovina, were annexed to Austria-Hungary against her will—and theirs. Serbia, who would either give in to deliver the murderers of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his morganatic wife to Austria, or fight to keep them! Serbia, who would be swallowed militaristically anyway,—and Serbia, who actually gave in but was involved in war all the same—because the Austrian empire needed war to keep her social-democrats from becoming too powerful!

Serbia would have forty-eight hours to answer the ultimatum from Austria,—and this was the time required, since the declaration of war after the forty-eighth hour would close the boundaries of Austria-Hungary as fast as a latched door, for the daughter of the war minister to get outside if she wished to go on her primrose path. . . .

She did. Her elopement with Jock Steers was planned. She had decided to give up Vienna, court life, balls, admirers, stilted conversation, narrow aristocracy, to try her hand at the mad escapade of a love affair, unbridled, unlicensed, below her "station," so-called, and pandering merely to the morbid level of a warped nature, low, degrading... an affair with a groom!

Steers stood outside in a loud, checkered English raglan and cap, with a thin stick in his hands, housed in yellow gloves. . .

She was going to live! She loved!

The door of her house opened cautiously, she peered outside... Yes, there he was—her lochinvar. She gave him a smile. He answered from the side of his mouth where his cigarette was hanging—the kind of a smile thieves exchange over a "con" victim. . .

A two-horse carriage stood there in the semi-gloom. Day was battling with the night elements, dawn streaked in slowly.

"I'm here," she whispered. The adventure was giving her a thrill.

He muttered under his breath so she could hardly hear him, "It's twenty to five, train goes ten after... have you got everything? Sure you want to go? Don't break down....."

She gave a low laugh.

"Ssh...."

"Ha-ha, you don't know me!"

"Yes I do. Come on, give me the valises..."

He could have taken them. She took them instead.

"Wait a moment," she said. "I have something to give you."

"Not here...get into the cab."

She was already fumbling in her breast and took out the chamois bag, heavy with the deposits of her jewel-casket—

"My dear, put this in your pocket."

His brow wrinkled, "What is it?"

"You see... open it."

He did so. He was dazzled! His eyes fell on all the stones, lying still and silent and weighty in his hand under the dome of the pewter sky. . . How he devoured with greedy glances those shining little monsters! Ready cash! Jewels! . . . He closed the bag, latching the cord over the neck, giving it a twist, a pull... a grunt of satisfaction accompanied the action. She took this for assent, which it was; he put them in his inner coat pocket, holding out his raglan coat with

the other hand, with the collar half turned up like a *Strizzi*. . . .

And now they left in the carriage. Her trunk stood up in front with the driver. His bag was on the inside next to hers. Side by side they sat. And before them, one white horse, one black—as different as the two passengers they drew behind them—as much of a contrast and trotting as nicely together once they felt the whip. . .

A lantern man with a drill duster and a long bamboo stick extinguished the light attached to her house as they rounded the first corner.....

"Südbahnhof[1]," said Jock, sticking his head out of the cab window and speaking audibly for the first time.

The man on the box nodded.

[1]South Railroad Station.

XXV

PUNCH AND JUDY

All the way to the Semmering[1], Jock's love was on the ascending scale. As the railroad went up, so went he, pledging his amorous mistress all the delights which only a woman, more in love with adventure than sanity, could crave. . .

She heaped caresses on him in the privacy of their railroad car. Jock was very exact. He returned two for one. He was as affable and loved as devotedly as at any time in the stable, principally toward the last hours of his stay there.

He was always in the same position—until they reached the Semmering. She was in his arms, they smoked one cigarette—he never used cigars—and mingled their breaths as fragrantly as any two young people in love. . . He sat perfectly still as the engine climbed. It is a serpentine grade. The Semmering is one of the highest points in the eastern Alps. They were going over the Alps into Italy. The plan was to go to Venice. Venice was romantic. It had canals, beautiful gondolas, gondoliers, lights playing in the water, moonbeams overhead, quiet whispered words, strains of music. . . .

Venice is the paradise of lovers, and Gisella was as much infatuated as she ever hoped to be in her life.

She murmured into his ear—

"Damn the fools who don't know what a spree is—here we are!"

"Yes," said Jock.

"There's a hornets' nest at home... silly, slimy diplomacy, and we got out just in time. They shut the gates

[1]mountain between Austria and Styria, 4,105 feet high.

in forty-eight hours and we'd have been stuck in Austria. That would have been a hell's pickle!" . . .

"Sure," said Jock.

"You glad you're here?"

"Sure."

"Love me?"

"Sure."

"Light another cigarette. . ."

They smoked in silence. Jock was doing a lot of tall thinking. His brain was getting just as sharp as hers was weakening in contact with him. He had a degrading influence on her; her wits, her subtlety, the pride of a woman and niceties of all nature were being slowly corroded like the action of water on brass. . . He was an element she had only to cultivate to eat through her own marrow... but he thought that fate had blown on his finger nails and was giving him a pretty good lustre! If his stable mates in England could have seen him just then they would have grunted—

"Jock, the dope's straight... you run accordin' to form! The filly's got a good head, but you run 'er off 'er feet." . . .

To which Jock, the lady-killer, would have responded:

"The lady's 'ead ain't 'alf 's important as the gems she give me and the purse strapped onto 'er shoulder!" And he had it planned what he should do when he reached Venice; stretched out and enjoyed comfort in the meantime.

Gisella slept part of the journey with her head against his collar. When they reached the Semmering she thought she was in the seventh heaven instead of the first! Her arms were perfectly limp, her limbs relaxed, conversation was impossible between them because they had nothing to say but so very much to occupy their emotions, and cast daring glances at each

other when their eyes were not so close that they looked cross-eyed.....

He commenced to stretch himself—after the Semmering. He was stiff, his back was paralyzed. He gave her a little shove, regardless of the perfumed, warm, voluptuous Gisella that had given herself into his keeping, and her moist, crimson lips—the lips of a courtesan and his mistress. Her golden hair was shining around her head like an oriole. It inflamed him. He wanted to beat her! to destroy that look of satisfaction! He gave her a vicious shove, from brutality, sheer, quivering animal instinct to dominate. And he saw her eyes open widely, startled, and sink back into her head, quizzically. . . She asked him—"What's the matter, Jock?"

"I'm stiff."

"Well, get up and stretch."

She said it so languidly, he felt his fists contract and he could have struck her placid, amorous, contented, lazy face and breasts with his fist,—struck her, mashed her and them!... He choked, held himself in check and let the spasm pass.....

"I said, get up and stretch... where are we?"

"Semmering..."

"Going down?"

"Can't you feel the motion of the train?"

"No... can you?"

"Sure!"

"Come back and lie down..."

He lit himself a cigarette, standing on his feet and swaying with the motion of the train.

"It's a damn long trip to Venice, ain't it?" he said.

"You think so?" she asked with a rising inflection which suggested that it could not possibly be long enough if he felt as she did—morbidly contented. . . "I hadn't noticed... dear, get me my satchel..."

"Which one?"

"I haven't so many."

"You got enough."

"What's the matter with you? I want you to get my little bag. Now hand it over—it's under the coat..."

"What's in it?"

"Money..."

He sat down next to her, having fetched it.

"Count it... let's see how much you got..."

She gave him a sarcastic look.

There were four folders of express cheques, he looked at them as she opened and closed the covers, snapping them together—

"When we get to Venice I want you to take charge of them," she said, placidly, "it will save me the trouble..."

"And why not now?"

"Well, I'll have to countersign them anyway..."

He got up again and took a turn around. Twelve thousand dollars! By God and his guts, what a load of money! *Twelve thousand!* Sinews and souls! brains of the devil! He swore to himself and the pen itched to come out of his pocket!

He sat down and took her little hand in his—

"Haven't we been 'appy?...."

"Of course," said she.

"Well, give us the money," he said, "I'll take care of it now..."

"Unsigned?"

"Well, sign it!"

"But...in front of a witness... I mean, they have to be signed when they're cashed. It can't be done now, they wouldn't be good...."

That was true, he wasn't cashing them.

Hell!

He got up.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked him again.

He was commencing to irritate her with his dictatorial way about money, and hopping up and down... "Sit still."

"I don't have to because you say so!" he swung round on her insolently.

"No, you don't, but why not?"

"Because I won't."

"Don't be brutal..."

"Brutal—hell!"

"Sit down, Jock. . ."

The nervy hell of her to tell him to sit down! He itched and itched all over for that money. . .

If he hadn't the sight of a gaol in front of him, he'd choke her...

Gisella looked out of the window, sharply at him, out of the window... If there were a scruple rising in the sea of her contentment, it washed with a very calm ripple... it made her smile to see how ferocious the little mastiff looked, he, with his checked tweeds... and the bedazzlement of her smile always set him right again.

But he was changed. The Jock she knew was the Jock of the stable, her servant,—and this Jock was a man rabid for the other things of life... He had her body, he wanted her money, that purse with its cheques, properly indorsed... She had only seen the lower side which was the higher... now came the reckoning.

She laughed caustically...it was her trait, she did not want to infuriate him, but Jock swayed with the lurch of the train and came up with his jaws set. He called out several names, as choice as the roster of a rooming-house in the tenderloin, and he spat and cried—

"What th' hell! Who do you think you are—laughing at me? I'm damn sick of it..."

She laughed all the harder.

"Stop, I tell you! We're not in Vienna—it's not Jock and milady—it's you and me. I tell you, I won't stand it...I'm not your swine, your dirt!"

"Who said you were?..."

"I'm not."

She commenced to think. This was a vile beginning. But the Countess von Steinbrueck had one trait which is found in women of lesser degree and all races. She loved the idea of being possessed... brutality did not shock her unless it was impossible and furious beastiality—that could not be stemmed.

She liked to be conquered. The low side of life gave her a feeling of satisfaction. She was not ready to say, "I'm sunk! I'm done for!" by this little outbreak. She rather enjoyed it, and, therefore, assured him, with a little chuckling motion of her shoulders—she was secretly delighted!—

"You shall have everything your own way."

"Is that so? You bet I will!" he blazed forth. She still thought he was not in earnest, and, besides, the thinner the ice, the better she skated.... He quarreled with her later about horses, about mounts they could buy in Italy, or could not, asking for money; vilified her in grumbling tones under his breath when he came to nothing—yet. He was determined to carry off the elopement for his venal profit quite as much as the pleasure it had given him to possess a countess, and spat and fumed, grew ugly, hid it, determined to break her if she didn't "come through" when they were in Italy at the hotel and he had her to himself, utterly to himself!...and so they went on to Venice. . . .

She was uncertain how to take him by this time. He was not the same man. Her passionate nature was stimulated... at times she was revolted... between love and affection and abuse, it was like the affairs of some noted French actors and actresses who embraced, spat at one another, cried out with vilification, and threw themselves into one another's arms—all in the space of a moment! Her mouth drank his oaths and his kisses

practically at the same time, and with this submission, Jock the lady-killer adopted new tactics. . .

They were lodged at the Royal Danieli, which is not far from the Ponte di Rialto and is the finest hotel in the city. She had taken the precaution to buy herself a wedding ring, something in platinum set with diamonds, and kept turning this on her finger and laughing at herself.

The adventure was not bad. It satisfied her gluttony for freedom, romance. There were still depths she wanted to plumb. Jock would plumb them with her. Their leisure hung upon their hands, he was willing to go as deep as she. At times he loved her to distraction... then she sank into the lethargy that made her numb to his abuse, craving only this lustful feeling—this sinking she knew not into what, but it tasted so sweet in its bitterness.....

She cried out to him—

"Jock, you love me, you love me to distraction! My God, Jock, we could die together!" But neither one of them intended to die. They intended rather to live life to the fullest, Gisella to live her life out, as she called it, and Jock to see his way to becoming a millionaire, which is, even with grooms of fine ladies, the furthest object in the world.

He tortured her by beating her. But she only liked him the better! Jock took her nature entirely into his hands, remoulding it after the fashion of low underlings. He robbed her of her audacity, her pluck, the things that made her a countess over the rabble,—and when he had struck her unmercifully with his fist one day, she said to him—

"Do it again... it feels so nice!"

Against such a passion the stableman's cunning began to doubt itself. If he abused her she felt better than if he did not. Jock knew there was only one thing —his own presence, which, if she were robbed of,

would give her actual pain... He therefore proposed that they take a look around the city. He was tired of the same diet—it was too warm, too hot, too satisfying, and he wanted to give her a single sharp thrust that would make him complete master over her!

They turned automatically in the direction of the lower part of the city. They went into the city's slums. It is doubtful if he or she chose this. They probably chose it together, each having a reason. With him it was the return to former associations, as he had been a very low character. With her it was novelty, and the warped inclinations which had taken her this far. They were continuing to circulate with her blood. She wanted to throw herself into the mud-puddle, to come out stained, sophisticated, satisfied—to have known life in its deepest dregs! The dye was a crimson pigment, she wanted to bespatter herself with it. . .

And with this in mind, each urged the other. The establishment they visited, a public house in the Calle Barozzi, had a regular underworld clientele, and here was a very handsome Italian officer, visiting, who, immediately on perceiving her, made her signs, caused her to sit down by him at table, talked with her, smiled, oogled, and bit his long, black moustache until it threatened to be abolished from his lip.... She went further with him, and, such was the perversity of her nature, this temptation was agreeable to her. She did not note that Jock was absent, that he had disappeared. She went with the officer and found, an hour later when she returned to the public hall, that Jock had been gone, was back, sarcastic, and shrugged his shoulders in a vile manner on seeing her.

He did not question her, did not expect to have himself questioned, but smiled, amused, and exchanged a glance with her....

She felt somewhat guilty, however, and gave him an

express cheque at her hotel desk, where he cashed it, pocketed the money and left the same instant.

Late in the night he came in. He had been at the *Caffe Martin,* the noted restaurant frequented by bookmakers who come over from San Siro, Milan's race course, to lay wagers among the small sporting element in Venice. . .

The former trainer was "cleaned out" and came back to get more money... but he had the decency to let the demand for money go over until the next day. She was again alone at the hotel... her Italian officer came to keep her company, they went together—down to the establishment in the slums, paid the regular fee as if she were an inmate...left hours later. . . It was the same thing every day.

When her hotel bill was due she paid it, and they kept up the irregular life. He gambled and lost. She was gambling, in a different way, and was also steadily losing, although she did not know it. She thought she gained something—which is pastime for a moment, and passes, leaving a state of exhaustion... she was becoming more corrupted with every moment of her stay in Venice.

But she paid the bills. When her funds commenced running low, Jock thought it was time to move. He would rather gamble with the money than eat it up. His resolve was to make a hell of a lot of money, get rid of her—this cheat, who went about with God knows who!—and to celebrate by getting drunk on English ale! He took Gisella to a less expensive place, a third-string hotel. It was nearer the slums. This recommended it. She did not say a word. She was in a sort of sensual lethargy which made her his tool, the tool of the Italian and any other pleasure that offered for a moment . . . From this hotel they went to a still poorer one in the San Dona[1], the *Albergo del Capello*

[1]low district.

Nero, which means the hotel of the Black Hat and was not far from the Calle Barozzi. . . They had quarreled, outrageously, into the morning hours through the whole night, and were asked to vacate... She had only two express cheques left—something like four hundred dollars, as she had had fifteen thousand *kronen* in fifteen cheques in each book of the four. Two thousand *kronen* remained. She gave him one of these. He had beaten her brutally, causing her to cough. This cough kept up, it started to strangle her...but she was young and strong, she fought with him!

It was a degrading moment—only the first of the worse hours that followed. And again that sensation of happiness when he struck her invaded her whole system for some time. She wanted him to beat her! It was a culminating shame. But Jock, aware at last that his beating gave her pleasure, held off... she inflamed him, he only pinched her, cursed, but did not strike, in order to satisfy her. . . .

The Countess Gisella was without money or jewels.

She asked him for the jewels.

"Ooh, my beauty—my fine huzzy, little rotten onion!...whotcha think, I nurse them jewels? I make 'em grow in my pocket?....no, they ain't pawned, no uncle 'as got 'em... I lost 'em—you hear that, lost 'em in the 'ouse we visited when we come to Venice... Now, whotcha think of that!" he threw at her brazonly, watching for the effect.

"My God, you didn't lose them?"

"Lost 'em, so sure's I stand 'ere!"

"Where?" she gasped.

"I told you, dammit...in the whore-house...."

She covered her face with her hands—

"The whole bag, Jock?"

"The whole—dam'—outfit!"

She did not know whether to believe him, he lied, he

thieved, he stole, he was as liable to lose them as to pawn them and spend the money....

"Are you sure?...there was a stone in there worth eighty thousand *kronen*—my blue diamond—oh my God, you've lost my jewels, the whole bag, everything was in there, everything I owned! Now what are we going to do?"

He waited for her to subside. He had the bag in his pocket that moment, he never slept without it. *That* he determined to use in the proper time and place. He had taken her second-to-last express cheque. Now she had nothing—he could afford to cut loose and the jewels had a singular little purpose, a mission in his pocket...they would make him his fortune—millions! He had a scheme. He understood horses. . . .

With that Jock went out and Gisella thought herself very wretched. She waited until evening—evening passed into night. She coughed—insistently. It was nothing in reality, only she felt mentally lethargic and unable to think with her former brilliant wit. . . By midnight she heard his key in the door. The room was rather wretched. He stepped in.

"Get out of here!"

That was what he said when he stepped in and switched on the light. She had not gone to bed.

"Get out!"

"What do you want?" wretchedly she inquired, dazed. . .

"I wantcha to get out," he was smelling of drink, "take your bags, take whotcha got and get out!"

She still did not comprehend.

"You hear me?... Annie, come here..." he called in a girl from the hall, brazon, with a highly painted face and cheap finery...picked up in the *Caffe Martin,* where he drank with the bookmakers... "Come in here, we got the place to ourselves... you, get out!"

The girl with the cheap finery started to laugh—

"Who you got here?"

"Nobody! get out!"

Gisella saw him throw her bags to the door. One was empty. She didn't want that. The second one she took, took her hat—it was no use to argue. She got out.

"...Hey, come back here!" Jock yelled after her, no sooner was she in the hall. "Come back, you scum!" . . . He sprang at her in a sudden fury and with inspiration wrenched the platinum wedding ring, bought by herself for her own final compromise with public repute, from her third finger, wetting the finger between his teeth with his tainted saliva... he gave her a shove—

"Get out!"

He threw her empty traveling bag after her!

XXVI

THE *RUTSCHBAHN*[1]

She had only two hundred dollars left. Her *kronen* were in *lire,* about five hundred. She had no place to go. The Italian officer, whom previously she had known from the house of assignation, left two days before for Palermo.

She was now alone, held a satchel, half filled, in one hand, her hat in the other... she mechanically put the bag down on the dimly lit little street, adjusted her hat, smiled a heartbroken smile—not for herself, for the groom upstairs—and looked about her. . . All was silence, the silence of a vast night in Venice with stars shining from the sky like artificial torches. . .

Where should she go? She had enough to keep her in plain decency a few weeks. If she wrote her father—it was a last recourse—she might receive some help, although Austria was now sewed up, tight, excited, crazy, distracted, with a war on her hands.... She had never written him. Would he care to hear from her in all this turmoil and with the remembrance of how she had thrown over his selection for her husband, the Count von Hohenegg?.... She doubted it. Yet, so long as her money lasted, she had a chance to live and breathe.

How foul of Jock to have thrown her out at night! That was all that touched Gisella at that moment—at midnight. Why didn't he wait, until it was morning, she could see her way, have it out with him? She should have had it out with him, but he would have beaten her, she would have loved him all the more and the parting would have been still harder.

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[1]The Toboggan.

All these thoughts trembled on the edge of her mind, confused, jumbled with one another... nothing was clear....

She wandered about and finally thought of that one place she felt she would be welcome—it was a shelter, it was open all hours...and she spent a good deal of money there... Gisella went to the house of the Calle Barozzi where she had fallen from grace—at least from monogamous intercourse—on her entrance to Venice. It was open. Nothing is veiled in a hypocritical manner in foreign city slums... houses of prostitution flourish, if not brazonly, still necessarily, and there was neither sliding secret panel in place of door nor hidden bell. She merely rang and entered, walking up the four steps she knew quite well, passing the housekeeper in the hallway. . . .

Before speaking to the proprietress, a fat German woman who spoke the language of Italy very badly, she went into the general room from force of habit and sat down.

She remembered her five hundred *lire*. She ordered a bottle of wine, as she never drank anything else, and tossed off two glasses. . . The room was noisy, flooded with light. It smelled from various mixed liquors, heavy smoke of tobacco and the nauseating odour of human bodies, overwrought and unnaturally stimulated. . . Gisella attracted to her table, by reason of her clothes, which were still fine, of good material and fitted her form correctly, two young French students on a tour of the underworld, having exhausted the art treasures of the city—above ground. They sat down as if accustomed to the atmosphere and to women of questionable character. . .

"Here long?" they asked her.

"How do you mean?" she asked, astonished.

"In this place?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, come...I supposed you were used to that question... come now, don't pretend...you are all here for some purpose...."

Still she did not understand exactly what the young rowdies were getting at. . .

"If you mean—" she stammered at last, "do I live here, I do not!"

She immediately wondered to herself why she had said this... was angry with herself. Why say something she didn't mean? She meant to stay here!

Her face flushed and she became aware of an unpleasant fact that was only now discovered to her: she had an aversion to being there; if not on the surface, still deeper down, in her sub-conscious mind...she was still too refined.

They commenced to make game of her—

"How high and mighty do we become when we want to put on airs. Now, my fine little lady, let us order some mucilage, something that will stick to the tongue... say, Belgian beer, or—"

"Let me treat you," said one, referring to the other.

"No, I'm paying."

They began to get into quite an argument.

"Hang it, bring beer!" finally one shouted, hammering with the head of his cane on the table: *"garçon,* beer, *vite, vite, depechez-vous!"* He kept his orders ringing in French without result, and, amid the din, it was deafening. . . Until the second boy left the table and started for the back room, crying—

"I am going for it myself, Raoul....take care of the little one...."

"No fear.... how long did you say you were here?" recommenced the other insolently. "Come... I must have an answer. I don't want to become—well, you know, the joys of life don't make up for the consequences...not always. I'm a strict young man...all

things don't go with me..." and so he kept up until she was dismayed . . . .

"I? I have not been here at all! I'm a stranger—an outsider. . ."

"Ooh...well, what difference does that make? None. He's gone, what shall we do, we are alone, but we can't go here. . ."

The room whirled around her, the evil-coloured paper on the walls started to shriek in her ears as if it had a voice instead of a colour. . . the sight of what was going on, the vile music, voices in every pitch grating together in discordant and tremulous accents, singing lusty songs, the women dancing—all this went against her. Besides, there were disgusting looking men with their moustaches trailing with beer and tobacco juice, looking into her eyes and at her form. . .

The student became more ardent, more insistent—"Say, missy, I liked the look of you the first minute... I knew you didn't belong here... come, little one, *allons-nous-en?*...you know....I will fix it, we will speak to the proprietress, she'll allow us, we can use these—oh hell! here he comes."

The other boy was coming, in his hands three bottles and three glasses—

"That's it...serve yourself. Take 'em quick before I drop 'em!"

He shoved them onto the table.

The sight of the beer filled her with nausea. She could buy champagne... "I never drink that," she said.

"Well, why didn't you say so?" he asked astonished... "the lady drinks—hell, what do you drink? Raoul, get the lady some—some—"

Raoul started to grumble in his throat, he wanted to finish his conversation that he had commenced.

"Very well, I'll go again...."

"No, I'll go..."

"I!"

"I!"

Gisella looked for a way to slip out. She was not intoxicated. She had only drunk three glasses of wine, which to her was a mere beginning. The students had tippled longer than she already. . .

"I don't want anything," she protested. "if it's necessary to drink, drink alone... I am going."

"Where to?"

"Why is that?"

"I have had quite enough."

"Nothing!" both exclaimed. She started to get up. Where was she to go? what to do?

"I say, my little one, don't be in such a hurry," began Raoul, "we can buy you some wine...look, see here, I've got money!" He had it in all his pockets... "Stay a while... if it suits you, we'll go upstairs... it'll pay you well... stay on! Hey, my friend Henri, you look for somebody else... she don't want but one of us—at a time..." he started in to wink at his companion, "is that right? . . .

"Well, now, what do you think of that? She was dissatisfied... do you think she knew you were sy——"

The rest of his voice went trailing off into nothing in the babel as Gisella reached the door... What her scruples were, if any, she could not fathom. She simply went. It was not a conscious physical repulsion... she did not know the students, one or the other, were not in good health, that they were infected, as the saying goes, with the crimes of love, too much love, or what is the desecration of love. . . .

She found an ordinary hotel, very simple and plain, and was ready to spend the balance of the night in maudlin tears over her separation from Jock.

Now this vile reprobate was drinking himself to intoxication in the room of the hotel he formerly occupied with her, with another woman called "Annie."

The first fall is the worst fall, since it starts the

ardent pleasure devotee on the toboggan which ends in the gutter.

Gisella sat on the bed and cried the morning through. When dawn arrived, she was yet dazed, semi-conscious, and not at all sleepy, since she felt nothing. She merely looked around for her bag—the little one containing the single express cheque left to her from sixty like it—in order to take out a handkerchief. She noticed blood on her lip and hand from biting her lip and clawing the bed covering at intervals with her fingers. . . .

Life was yet good, something still inspired her, love and romance and all those Viennese traits which are learned with birth in the cradle and are not shaken off so easily like dust off the coat collar,—she reached for her bag... She opened it—inside were her handkerchiefs, stained and squeezed together gloves, once white now a muddy yellow, some slices of paper, bill heads from the hotel last vacated, something else, something else, but no express cheque! She looked again, it was missing; once more, it was gone!

Ah, those wretched students! Or she thought it was a girl that looked at her from a table as she brushed by, waiting for the waiters to pass...from this same table the little students came when she attracted them. Was it her fault? They came of their own free will, she didn't call them. And now that prostitute—that girl— It all came back....ah, what a miserable theft!.....

Then Gisella, outraged but not crushed by this last misfortune, considered what she should do next: write to her father? No, no, no!

Then one other thing remained. She had a cousin living in Venice...a nobleman... he belonged to an old house. He was her cousin on her mother's side, removed by one generation. Duca della Grazia, arrogant, conceited, rich, elegant, exclusive... should she ask some shelter of della Grazia?

When she decided on this she got up at once. She remembered his address but never recalled how she got there. She went on foot. That was certain. It was a long distance, over cobbled streets and through alleys... she finished by riding in a canal boat after spending her last loose coin and looking wretched, but aristocratic all the same, so the boatman took her. They have a singular sentiment—these Venetian boatmen. . . She had some trouble with the hotel, too. She never slept in the bed but they wanted to charge her all the same... this was impossible, she had no funds, so there were words, she got out—as she got out, peremptorily, from the last hotel with Jock....

Duca della Grazia was a colonel in command of the *Savoia Cavallerio*[1]. His *palazzo* faced the Grand Canal on the Piazza San Marco, across from the *Quadri*[2], in the very center of romantic Venice. . . Her entrance here was more spectacular than pitiful...his young daughter, Donna Fiora, knew her at once! Time had not altered her... Donna Fiora had been a guest in her house two seasons back. . . .

Fiora lay all the misery of her cousin, without reserve, on the conditions which were upsetting Europe. She thought probably all Europe was to blame that a cousin of hers, a young kinswoman, should have been reduced without funds. Only revolutions could do this, war conditions, social perversity. The upper class ruled, was infallible....

However she came to this conclusion, Gisella quickly disillusioned her...

"I am here without money and without clothes, just as you see me, because I ran away from Vienna with my groom and he threw me off!" She said it brazenly, with her usual amount of truth. . .

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[1]Savoy Cavalry stationed in Naples.

[2]famous café, that, along with the *Florian,* opposite, is one of the landmarks of Venice.

"Shocking!" said Fiora, and looked upon her as a very remarkable woman. This was interesting, expansive.... "Come right in and stay in," she said, "papa is in Rome..."

The duke was in Rome...urgent matters called, matters of state....

When Gisella was established in the house, due to the generosity and simple mindedness, or call it admiration of daring, of her cousin, Donna Fiora della Grazia, her young brother came in to see her...

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "my cousin from Vienna! How is it in Vienna, cousin?"

"I don't know," she answered, "it is four months since I was there."

"Four months!"

"Four months."

"Doing what? Where have you been?"

"Right here," she answered...

"And only came to see us now!" . . .

"Come, leave her, Marino, she has had a tiresome trip...." Fiora drew him out of earshot, and in her admiration added: "she has run off from home, eloped with a man—her lover, they fell out, here she is penniless!" . . .

"You don't mean it!" uttered the young reprobate, who saw some advantage in this to him, as he always admired his dashing Viennese cousin. "Well, well...."

"Say nothing of it to her."

"Of course not!"

"All right...."

He had, however, a friend. They were, like the college students in the house of illfame, companions, familiars... they did nothing without each other: to live, to love, to despair, sign and plot....

"Well, well," he repeated to himself... "this is entirely interesting!" And he went to Gisella, and, after several minutes, convinced her he was quite the most

sincere admirer she ever had in her life. Run off with a groom? La, la!.... And, at that, he made himself agreeable, which meant disagreeable under the circumstances, as the affair was within the sacred circle—the home. And she discovered the best way to keep the regard of the young man and his sister was to give in to the attentions of the young man and to keep the knowledge of so doing from his sister....

This programme Gisella followed to the letter. She ate with the sister and slept with the brother.... After this, his friend paid them a visit and months rolled around in the gayest companionship in the world. One fine hour followed another...life was song, delight and amorosity! She would not have left if Jock Steers had begged on his knees for the rest of his life... She forgot all about Jock Steers and his sordid infatuation. She was cured, delivered from the sink, only to be in worse position from the cure than the illness—she was headed for the cesspool and the aim was, unfortunately for this woman's reckless nonchalance and outlook upon feverish life, too exact.... she aimed—and fell—at one stroke!...

On the 23rd of May, 1915, something very interesting took place in the history of Italy—a national event!

Don Marino della Grazia followed this by leaving Venice and going toward the Trentino... Guilio Labia, the young friend, a lieutenant in the cavalry the same as her cousin and late paramour, was wounded in a *duello,* which kept him at home, and he paid her visits as he recovered and tried to place himself in as good favour with her as she had been with her cousin, the departed Marino. . . But love is cunning and cannot be forced, even the poor imitation of it—she detested this Guilio as much as her cousin pleased her... So Gisella was right in thinking she was not cut out for the life of a *demi-mondaine*... she was too temperamental.

She told him she loathed him, his sullen face, the scar

on his nose, his beard, his breath—everything! She was not compromising with her dishonour... she had no honour....

So Guilio was as bitter as he was homely and disagreeable. He denounced her to the authorities. She was the daughter of the war minister. He was Austrian. She was Austrian. They were in Italy. War was on! She had another place that was waiting for her when they took her out of the *Palazzo della Grazia.* The little wretch, in spite, saw that she got there, penniless, companionless, and almost minus her clothes... It was in Caserta, about an hour out from Naples, in central Italy—the convent of the Sisters of Charity—*Convento della Suore di Carita,* used for the internment of noblewomen who were *quasi* prisoners of war.

XXVII

THE FOUR MUSKETEERS OF THE COURT

Yes, war was on!

On July 23, 1914—fatal date!—around the audience hall of the Emperor Franz-Josef, in Austria, stood groups of officers, chamberlains, generals, colonels, Hungarian life-guards, Austrian, any number of other privileged persons who were to see the fate of twenty-nine countries, great and small, go into the dust heap! all by the stroke of a pen! all in the space of a minute!

This moment was brought about by the Emperor Franz-Josef's signature to a very singular paper which lay before him on his desk after the murders of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the Duchess Hohenberg at Serajevo... twenty-five days after, an eternity! a spasm in history! a whole age of diplomacy and politics and intrigue and dissolution, summed up in the space of twenty-five days! The emperor signed the ultimatum to Serbia.....

Thereafter, Serbia, not wishing to give up her sovereignty, her independence, all the hard won fruits of the Balkan war, yet wishing to avoid another war, compromised—offered to go part way, as the saying is, to keep the peace in chaotic Europe. . . But Russia interfered, Germany interfered, fate interfered, and, lastly, the Emperor Franz-Josef, against his wishes, we are told! interfered, and the whole international system was broken into bits in a moment!

July 25th, Austria withdrew her minister from Belgrade. Sinister move.

July 26th, England offered suggestions for compromise from London, which were refused.

July 27th, Austria-Hungary declared war...the emperor sat again in his study, a paper before him, his pen shook in his hand. . . Down went the pen, the ink followed after, a word spelled out, another—so the heavens rained blood!

When the news was carried into the audience chamber, Rudi and Nicki and Franzl and Eitel stood like little musketeers waiting for the explosion, and when it came—they looked at one another.

Everybody was speechless. It is in hours like this that men look at one another but have nothing to say, a moment passes, another—then clamour seizes them, they have to talk, rapidly, fluently, discussing everything—and have still nothing to say!

So it was at this time. The minister of war, von Steinbrueck, who stood at the emperor's right hand and implored him to sign the little paper after the German ambassador, who stood on the emperor's left, signalled him to do so,—came into the audience chamber, everybody looked expectantly—

"War!" he said.

Now, when this was over, Franzl became very serious—

"It is terrible—a terrible thing!" he said, and repeated this over and over. . . Franzl was about to realise the possibilities, because he had only so recently had some very serious events happen in his own life, dwarfed by comparison to the episodes shaking Europe, but mighty to his own heart nevertheless. . .

Nicki exclaimed—

"I have always known that Hungary would have to stand behind Austria in some such crisis....it is easy to lick Serbia, but Russia—let us look out."

Eitel said—

"My friends, we have only got to say good-bye to Vienna long enough to be missed by our sweethearts. Such a chance only comes once in our lives. *Wir haben*

alle gelebt und geliebt...na! so geht es... die Damen müssen uns vermissen, yah, Rudi?"[1] . . .

Rudi, after his usual formula, burst out laughing. . .

"Well, let us go... does the emperor need us? I think not," and so on, variously, they enquired, found they were at liberty, started off together and clasped hands and shoulders after the way of true friends and brother musketeers...

Presently Rudi parted from them, as he was a uhlan and had a different barracks to leave from—the Prater Caserne, which was clear across the city from the others. . . Uhlans have the task to investigate the strength in men and supplies of the enemy, his fortifications, redoubts, position of the opposing troops, their ammunition, if possible, the quantity of cannon, location of general staff headquarters, hospitals, disposition of regiments, and, lastly, to come at gun-muzzles with any of the reconnoitering troops of the opposing forces if they should be unlucky enough to venture too far or ride in or out of a wood or on a hidden road at the wrong time.

With these things in mind, Rudi was a very capable officer. Especially as he had so little disposition to realise anything and could be shot and have his head sent off of his body without squeamishness or qualm, and probably never be the wiser.

Nicki, on the other hand, was a very sullen officer in time of war. He was earnest and even sarcastic, believing his mount could carry him to victory anywhere—that he rode like the devil and never expected anyone to catch him, since hell is the natural abode of devils and they would surely go there! He condemned them in advance. Nicki was a hussar. . . .

Franzl and Eitel were dragoons, of different companies, since each was a captain; they even belonged to

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[1] "We have all lived and loved . . ." (credited to Heine) . . . "so it is, the ladies must miss us, yes, Rudi?"

different regiments, and wore differently coloured collars and cuffs on their uniforms in time of peace. . . .

Now all regretted that the exigencies of the moment tore them apart... They could not, like the traditional companions—the four guardsmen of Alexandre Dumas' romances—who rode together, fought together, hunted the queen's diamond buckles together and gambled and saved each others' necks together! stay in this punitive little war—this excursion into neighbouring Serbia—together, to come home, after being in Belgrade, and tell what a fine time King Peter gave them by leaving them his city to carouse in, far from Vienna and the usual tide of things. . . .

Franzl had been allocated to a swivel-chair. He belonged to the group during the arrangements for war, who sit with spurs on their heels and scratch the tops of desks, and who often remain there if family connections are potent enough, or quantity of money, or general characteristics that appeal, like love for the emperor and desire to be near him,—so that the office mechanics have more use for him supposedly than his regiment at the front in battle. He could have continued at this occupation, which is safe, sound and amiable. . .

But Franzl was at heart a straight forward fellow, and believed in getting to the point at issue in the shortest manner possible. So he sent in his resignation, said to Eitel: "I am going to the front!" to which Eitel replied, "Good... that is the place to get scars to warm the hearts of the ladies!" and, aside from this object, which was characteristic of the Prince of Hochmut but really did not enter into Franzl's calculations, as he had had just recently two such disastrous affairs with ladies,—he entered the regimental office, swimming with excitement, and earnestly approached his colonel's desk—

"I most obediently report for duty, sir," he said in service uniform.

"Good!" His colonel rose and shook his hand: "we are glad to have you with us again... I thought you would not stick to that swivel-chair—it's a good occupation for a gray head." Which was true... "Now, see here," said the colonel, "we march day after tomorrow...."

Franzl bowed and accepted his orders. . . He was placed in command of the Fourth *Escadrone*[1], Sixth Dragoon Regiment, and withdrew to put himself in readiness to act during the two days that intervened. . .

When the time for parting came, Vienna was in her most martial garb... Flags fluttered, bands played in the parks, before the Hofburg, at every crossing and in between... There was a festive air which kept up because the people were so consumed with anxiety, sending their loved ones off with a gay air, assumed in place of the tears that were bound to follow. . . everyone wore some decoration, either a flag or a flower... oak leaves festooned the heads of horses carrying riders mounted with spurs and rifles at the saddle, pistols in holsters, ready to leap out....

And now the streets were lined as far as the eye could see—thousands of women and old pensioners and boys and girls stood and awaited the grand sight... Vienna was going to war!

The procession came, field guns passed, train wagons...over the same Ringstrasse, past the Bellario where the wind always blows on the hottest days. The Wiener Wald was sending an especially cool breeze down the wide avenue bordered with handsome squares, along the bridle-path, driveways and the shaded promenades that had the odour of violets blended with the royal manure from the stables... The route would take them through the Schwartzenberg Platz up the Prince Eugène Strasse to the Südbahnhof. . .[2] And among

[1]company of men numbering 150.

[2]Prince Eugène of Savoy captured Belgrade for Austria in 1714.

these spectators stood the concessionaires from the Wurstelprater—all those to whom war meant the end of their business, the shutting up of their booths, because pleasure must give way to stern necessity and laughter to heart throbs.

Here stood the fat woman, the dwarfs on the shoulders of each other, several of the barkers who wore their checkered suits decorated with the nation's colours, also the giant from the Himalaya mountains who had never been beyond the Kronprinz Rudolf-Brücke or outer confines of the Prater at the extreme end; the thin man, the lady without lower body, standing on her feet....they were here, there, sprinkled among less public characters. . . And Agnes was among them, with Bartholomew, the hunchback from the *Wundersalon.* They stood side by side, she was four inches taller than he, who merely topped five feet due to his deformity, a crooked back. . . But she hid herself, leaning in such a position beside a stout tree that only her head was visible and little of that. Her eyes peered out, she was looking querulously, and on the arrival of the Fourth *Escadrone,* her heart commenced a tattoo that threatened to drive it right out of her bosom! Franzl was in this company, she knew his regiment, the troops of other platoons passed before her. . .

Then, suddenly, there he was!

She hid herself, drawing back, and before her pale face passed, first the colonel, who rode very stiff and saluted without a flicker of emotion, and then the captain, turning his eyes directly toward her, did not see her, passed onward bowing slightly, his mount prancing, very debonair—as the Count von Hohenegg always was—and with oak leaves on his helmet.

How the helmet shone underneath, dazzling her already sparkling eyes, moist with tears!

He was going to war, to fight for freedom and country and revenge, and to die, perhaps. . .

It is an age-old pursuit and an age-old feeling that accompanies it: glory for the man and a certain ecstacy above personal safety,—and sorrow for the woman. Millions had felt it before her... now she felt as if she were enduring it for the first time in history, and all alone.....

"Well, that is a gay young fellow!" said Bartholomew, not recognising Franzl in his uniform. . . "Look how he rides..." Franzl was saluting with his sword. "If he comes home with two good arms an' legs——" the rest of his voice was drowned in the general uproar, everybody crying at once to send off the heroes, those who marched afoot and the gallant young officers who rode at the head.

Agnes, as soon as her own eyes cleared, perceived that the hunchback was turning a very melancholy profile to her. He seemed to be struggling with some of his own emotions, looked away... presently she saw a large tear welling down his cheek.

"What is it, Bartholomew?" she managed to say in his ear, "have you seen someone?...."

He shook his head, "No..."

She slipped her hand into his, kindly, realising all at once—it was his deformity... "I can't go," she remembered he said at the Prater, "I can't go, they won't take me... I'm—I'm not good—for—anythin'...."

"Oh, yes you are, Bartholomew," she answered him, "you're good for a whole lot!"

"What?"

She was forced to hesitate...what was he good for? how could a crippled man fight?...

"You see...you see," he gasped, "only those go whom God wills to go... it's an unjust God! unjust! unjust!"...

He wanted to go and could not; another, in the ranks of the soldiers, would have given his straight back for a crooked one in order to stay at home.

Nepomuck Navratil, the peasant from Sodowa, Bo-

hemian who bribed two regimental surgeons to escape military duty, who followed his master because he had faith only in that master and not in the State or the fundaments of war, who feared for his life as if that life were the most valuable in all the world,—cringed, became palsied at the thought of shooting, killing another human being or having himself killed... He was now led, in spite of all his efforts, to the slaughter!... *He had to go!* Musket at shoulder, blanket and pack on back, step-to-toe, he marched. . . sworn enemy to violence. . . . a coward, a *Putzer*—button-polisher, not warrior! . . .

"Ooh, look—see, there is someone I know!" cried Agnes joyously, leaping out of the line, anxious actually to embrace him. "Here is our friend who brought me the flowers." He was connected with Franz Meier. The thought warmed her...she threw herself directly before him—

..."A flower...a flower...from me this time!" she gasped, and held up a single acacia spray before him. . .

Nepomuck should have taken it and worn it... Instead he turned to her a face like pewter...so gray, so ashen from his terror, that she cried out in amazement!....

The band swept up with its military airs.

"Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser....."[1]

Everybody sang, carrying on a tremendous cadence... only she saw that ashen face, more terrible in its violent emotions than any engagement on the Serbian frontier, —defiant, but going to war. . .

It haunted her...she could not sing but burst out into violent sobbing. . . .

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[1]Austro-Hungarian national air.

XXVIII

THE GLEANERS

The war had closed the Wurstelprater, the booths were boarded up and the canvas covering that was spread every midnight around and above the merry-go-round had been permanently fastened and nailed into place.

Everybody had left, the men, who were capable, to fight, the women to go into hospitals, in the foundries, on the street cars as front or rear guards, and as waitresses, street-sweepers, whatever was formerly done by the male sex and now devolved on the women as one after another regiment was made up, called in and sent to the front. . .

A complete year—from the beginning of August until the beginning of August, twelve months later—had been spent, and the peace which was only broken between Austria and Serbia at first, now involved all the great powers, leaving only the arbiter across the seas to judge of the chaos reigning three thousand miles away! Italy was in since May... that aggravated things with Austria as her troops had to be in three directions at once. Russia's participation cut off the estates of the nobles in Galicia. Franzl, unfortunately for him, had his income from this source. Others, by the score, were in the same boat...great changes were in store. . . .

The Prater was covered with snow all through the bleak winter, it remained as if covered—literally without thaw, being deserted except for the waste lands, a sort of swamp behind the park formerly fitted with cranes for unloading barges that came up the river from the Balkans, later taking on especial life through the mobilisation of troops... Now it still throbbed with

military preparation...otherwise the chestnuts bloomed and the birds fluttered through the branches, chittering to themselves; the cafés still held latched doors, *Venedig in Wien* was silent as the *Riesenrad,* revolving for the last time the night of July 31st in 1914. . .

Vienna was a different city. Although the buildings were the same, the avenues as broad, the business very lively, Radetzky still sat his bronze horse before the Am Hof, looking out into space, the "Stock im Eisen" was fastened as ever in the Graben, to the west was the Danube, the Kahlenberg and Leopoldberg[1], to the north the immense Rotunda, to the east the great plain of the Marchfeld with the distant Carpathians against the horizon, and south, the Schneeberg[2].... still Vienna was not the same...it was poverty stricken, the poorer classes had become so much poorer, and prodigality gave place to conservation in everything: food, drink, wits, flour, human life, morals... It was a different Vienna.

The harvests came in before the first hostilities. When the second year arrived and the harvests should have been as heavy, if not heavier, than the season previous, the man-power was at the front and crops fell below the necessary standard. Starvation commenced to creep on padded feet into the market-stalls. Not an official's home but was well supplied. Not a restaurant but gave out food, in smaller portions, but sufficient still... The rise of a giant is from the roots, and, whether it is a tree or a ladder, the first rung has to be mounted before the second or the third can be reached. Conditions commenced this way in Austria at the bottom. The poor man had little before the war, he now had nothing. The medium classes had more, little now remained. The rich—were always the rich, but at last

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[1]two beautiful mountains behind the Danube River, visible from Vienna.

[2]very imposing mountain, part of the Roxalpe range.

the giant was to reach the topmost rung and then the ladder would over-balance and the whole structure topple down!

Agnes Urban, whose little bread was taken away from her when the Volksprater closed its doors, found occupation easy to get as there was so much to do and so comparatively few to do it... She worked in the establishment of "Brust and Baugh." This was a manufactory for artificial limbs... She worked every day, earned good money as wages swam high. But if she had waited until every position were filled, which happened often with the select positions,—she would have had little, eaten once a day, if that often, and found her back-bone and her collar-bone growing together. . . .

She started the hour after securing a little tenement garret, after the fat woman, Mrs. Rossreiter, and herself left the Prater with a hand-wagon and two trunks upon it—their sole possessions. The fat woman could not take her *Wundersalon* along! She had to leave her capital behind, she had no occupation. . . Bartholomew took his monkey and his bundle of clothes. These were extended on a stick. He had, besides, in his pocket a lottery ticket—

"Number 2..7..9," he said impressively to Agnes, on parting at the doors, "I had a dream...two was smoke, seven fire, nine brimstone—I'll win yet, you see.... it ain't for nothin' they keep this lottery goin'; it's four years I been playin' an' luck wins out." . . .

She could have told him that luck always wins out because it is luckier sometimes to die than to live. But this morbid reflection, although she felt that her heart would burst just then, did not leave her lips. She smiled wanly instead, waved her hand at the voyager, who looked as if he were going on a long journey over the mountains and seas with his pack on his back, and watched him out of sight. . . . Bartholomew was going into Vienna in search of an occupation.

She stood perfectly pensive and gazed up into the sunlight. September was already advanced. It was time to remove. She had another interest than her own to look out for. The knowledge was just then very intense within her... she was without food, shelter, her clothing was much mended and frayed at the edges, her purse slim, her courage low, her heart too full to be of any use, save to overflow... Agnes had taken the fat woman into her confidence: she was going to have a child... not now, in months, perhaps, but all she remembered was Mrs. Rossreiter saying, "Poor child, poor child, poor child, it is always that way...no different... and he has gone to war and will never return, never, never!"

She added to her misery just that much. Yes, she was going to have a baby, and what would this say and what would that say?! But there was nobody to say anything. The population had all changed, everybody who was together had fallen apart, families, locations, districts were all destroyed, new faces were where the old ones had been, strange eyes greeted each other in every part of the city, and the soldiers were made and soldiers destroyed, and everybody worked to support them. That was the war at home...that was the way life became a merry-go-round, a mélee, on the Serbian border where Franzl was going, on the Galician where his estates were, on the Italian where his former fiancée was interned, in Vienna where his child was about to be born!.....

The artificial limb factory offered the best wages and the work was not too difficult. Agnes soon mastered it. She was working with the aim in sight: if it is a little boy, he shall be Franzl, if girl, she shall be called Francisca, and she repeated these names over and over and worked from morning till night.

She lived in the tenement garret with Mrs. Rossreiter. They cooked their coffee over an oil stove. Be-

fore long the fuel gave out, they were sitting in their outer coats in the room at night... the fat woman became asthmatic and wheezed and could not climb the steps, so she stayed at home. As cold as the winter grew, they remained without heat, the Danube was caked with ice, they heard stories of the army's sufferings in the north, the Serbian victories in the south; the giant wheel in the Prater remained as still as the night it ceased revolving, they saw only its outlines by clear day from their window; and hour after hour passed in the same morbid monotony by months. . . .

Then the year was over... Francisca was born, she had startling little blue eyes and was the image of her mother. . . .

"Such an angel! such a perfect little angel!" the fat woman greeted her: "never have I seen such a good child and such a quiet child, an' so pretty.... *In solchem Unglück a so schenes Kind zu habe!...nein, das is merkwerdig!*"[1]....

She was right. Out of the chaos of poverty, ill-health, lowness of spirits, the sights that are shocking, wounded returning, beggars commencing to fill the streets, work overpowering those who could work, the balance were cripples and unfit,—came this beautiful blossom. It was like an orchid on a dung-heap. She was pensive and gave the fat woman scarcely any trouble, as she had taken charge of her while her mother worked, after the necessary period. . . .

Agnes adored her baby...she was now four months old.

One day, leaving the factory as early as possible—it was still daylight, the month being August,—she stopped in a butcher's shop that was marked *"Pferdefleisch und Wurstwaren."* This meant that the butcher sold horse-flesh here as well as sausage meat made of

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[1]"In such misery one should have such a beautiful child! No, it is remarkable." (Low German.)

other ingredients... It was shocking but it was true. Why become nauseated at horse-flesh? it was as good as cow-flesh, as ox-flesh. The Viennese, distinguished for their culinary tastes, for their fine and discerning choice of viands, ate horse-flesh with a relish. It was a sign of the times. . .

So she went in and bought a single pair of the little round sausages, smaller than usual, very expensive. The price was staggering.

She took these and went on to a green-grocer's...it was the same. Lettuce brought forty *kronen,* white turnips fifty, kohlrabi, radishes, sugar, beans, flour, tallow candles.... what could she buy? and her salary was considered large!

With these small packages, she left and walked rapidly to her tenement. It was as near as possible to the factory. She could walk it in ten or twelve minutes... On the way she passed a lot that had been empty...it was now filled with people, women mostly, and small children... Men there were too, but it was the women that caught her eye...they stooped, picking up things from the lot, parcels, boxes, all sorts of extraneous matter... She knew it was this by the odour, foul and smelling like fresh and stale mixed swill. . . .

Agnes halted and observed this phenomenon for a while... what was it? Her heart gave a violent lurch in her breast; it was the municipal garbage heap, or, at least, one of these: the offal of hundreds of kitchens, hopelessly discarded bones of steaks, chops, legs of animals slaughtered to fill the middle-class paunches and the bellies of officialdom. Here hung the gleaners, poor and less than poor—famished, hollow-eyed, shrunken-chested, the first rung of that ladder which is class distinction, on which the ogre, Starvation, had already set the imprint of his foot....

She was impelled to run, but recalled there was no fuel in the house. No fuel...the month was August,

but food had to be cooked to go into the stomach cavities hot. She shuddered and walked into the lot upon the heaps of rubbish. She could now distinguish the offal: hills of cans, shrunken lettuce leaves, parsnip tops, corn husks, rags, soiled and frayed papers, blackened kettle-covers, not copper but tin, and cabbage ends where the hard part meets the stem. Little mounds rose of this and that, all foul, all odourous...bits segregated by the busy workers.

The women had dirty skirts of very bad material. Their faces were streaked but they were good faces... They had bindings over their heads, looking like peasants. Their feet were badly shod. Some walked barefooted. The little boys were all half-naked and playing around the undulating lot as if the game were needle-in-the-haystack or some such diversion... Here was a mother with several hampers and half a dozen little brats, all squirming like mice in a bin . . .

Presently she saw some boxes, black, grimy, that had held wet vegetables from a store, thrown down here... she broke the boxes apart. She forgot all about the gleaners. She made narrow slats and bound them together with string from one of her packages; and all this while others were coming to take the places of those, who, with filled pails and aprons wrapped around these discoveries hugged to their breasts and staggering under the weight of kitchen sewage, left the municipal pile... strange and inhuman procession . . .

She was about to leave when a woman next to her leaned over and caught an empty bone from under the pile of slats. She drew it out. It was white and long and already bleached from lying in the sun.

"There is nothing on that," thought Agnes, but she saw her place it with some others in a scrap of paper she was carrying. She moved on. The woman stooped again and brought up another derelict. It was like fishing the skeleton of an old ship from the ocean's

bottom, rotting and disintegrating from water and time.... She put these particles together, nursing them; she even overturned a large heap to get at the bottom, figuring, no doubt, it would be richer here. But the pile had been overturned and overturned... What was originally deposited was no more to be found than wheat in chicken yards where hens scratch and claw. . . Only dirt remained mingled with this and that—what is usually found in alleyways. . .

And then the woman looked familiar, or she had a back, turned to Agnes, that was so. Her coat was green, she had no waist underneath. The day was hot but she carried her coat on her shoulders nevertheless, so that, when faced at the front and stooping down, her breasts could be seen...they were firm and white, so she must be a young woman....

And who was this woman?

Agnes asked herself the question.

Someone she knew? impossible! She looked again, more closely, followed her, observing her from the back, the front.... Her shawl fell off, a black fringe that uncovered her face and left her head bare. The hair was dark but streaked with white.

If she would raise her head—

She did so. It was a familiar head.

The eyes looked at her.

Agnes would never have known who this gleaner of old bones was had not the eyes lit up and instantly the woman called her name!

"It is I, yes, Agnes," she responded....

"And it is I, Marianka!"

"How old you have grown!" she said involuntarily. . . .

XXIV

ALL-SOULS' DAY

Marianka had aged many years in one... Since leaving the Wurstelprater the morning after Schani Huber's murder, when she was arrested and had to stand trial, everything had taken place in her life.

She was acquitted. She was not guilty. The trial dragged out to a long conclusion, yet here she was now, out of prison and starving, which was worse than if she had been condemned to hard labour because then she would have had something to eat....

"I have been out three days," she said with the greatest effort, "I can hardly stand and have eaten only twice since I ate with the jail ladle... it was a bad hour for me when Schani died." And she bemoaned her fate as if the living proprietor of the *Ringelspiel* had done anything in their life together but abuse her....

"Have they ever found out who killed him?" Agnes asked.

"Not I, and that is a sure thing!"

"What have you there?"

"Bones; you see, that is all the government gives you to eat after it has robbed you."

"What did they take from you, Marianka?" said Agnes gently.

"My time...all that a poor woman has."

"Well now, come with me..."

"Where?"

"To my home."

"Where is that? You speak as if you'd gotten hold of somethin'..."

"I am workin' in the factory of Brust an' Baugh,

künstliche Arme und Beine..." she responded, "we have more work than we can do."

"Now, why didn't somebody tell me...an' me starvin' an' there's work to do..."

Agnes embraced her, shocked at the poor woman's misery of mind as well as body—"Throw those old bones away, Marianka...we've got enough for you, too... come along, it's easy to make room for another. One has only got to move a half foot to the right or left an' the room's big enough for four." . . .

They smiled together wanly, and home they went, up the flight of three long, narrow stairs to the top landing, where they lived under one roof.

"Who's here?" commenced Marianka, when she was exhausted by her climb and sank outside for a rest in front of the door...

"You'll see...only let me open. We are here all together...and you can get a place by me in the factory... only now come in and see who is inside..."

There is pride in the heart of every mother. Whether the time is peace or war, the child natural or legitimate, it's the same...offspring is offspring, as long as the world moves an emperor will take life but a mother will give it.

"Aah-ha, see here now..." they all started to speak together, "who is this? who is that? Marianka Huber! Aurora Rossreiter!"

The fat woman fell into the lean woman's arms, almost dragging her to the floor: "Is it you? is this so... do I see Marianka?"

"You see me an' it's all due to a pile of rubbish—an ash-heap... Do you know, Aggie, I've been on every pile of bones for a week...no, it seems to me it's a week, it's only three days! Well, who's dear little baby is that?!"

Now explanations were a great deal warmer in coming, if this could be possible. . . When they were

over, there was time to cook and think. They lived directly under the roof where it sloped, coming down in four directions so the room was narrow, high, desolate, surrounded by yellow billows of smoke from chimneys still able to vomit vile coal bought at high prices. On sunny days the single window gave them some light. The fat woman passed most of the day sitting in her chair, thinking aloud and rocking with her foot the improvised cradle of the daughter of Agnes. She was very asthmatic, her breath wheezed out in sounds like a blast bellows...but this did not disturb the child, who was growing very nicely, now four months old, gave nobody any trouble and slept and ate as quietly as a little sparrow.

Agnes' wages sufficed to keep her, the child and Mrs. Rossreiter.

Marianka, as soon as she recovered, went to work in the factory also. So there were two bread-earners.

The autumn came, the winter passed in cold, endless stretches that checked off the months as they sat at night in coverings of all sorts to keep themselves warm. It was indeed a cheerless winter. . . . Followed the spring and the three women looked at one another in their attic room and wistfully thought: "Ooh, if the Wurstelprater were only open how happy we would all be! Together once more and with the old sounds, music, smells, thunder of the *Rutschbahn, der Genuss des Lebens...*"[1] How pleasant! stimulating! the old atmosphere full of dust so it lay on the candies and fruits of the booths half an inch thick... but it was good dust and tasted well all the same.

Agnes said, "I wish this very minute you was standin' on the platform, Mrs. Rossreiter, and the crowd surgin' around your knees... It's a great feelin', ain't it?"

"*Nun,* yes," responded the fat woman. She was also

[1]enjoyment of life—said of candy, fruit and nut vendors.

carried back to the *patois* of the Wurstelprater and would have said more if her asthma allowed.

"We'll combine the two concessions...make one!" Marianka said enthusiastically, "we'll work together, hey? the merry-go-round an' the Punch an' Judy—the best show on the street! Hey, ain't it great?" . . .

"Sure, Boniface an' Bartholomew can work for both... Poor Boniface, I wonder where he's at now?" exclaimed Agnes. She also wondered where Bartholomew had gone.

But the Prater did not open.

Instead, All-Souls' Day arrived, the 2nd of November. The summer had pushed after the spring and the Church of Rome was about to commemorate its faithful deceased by taking into the cemeteries the living worshippers with asters and black crepe to decorate the graves.

Agnes and Marianka went, taking wreaths from the soldiers on the street who were crippled from the front and made and sold the rings of flowers for a few pennies... They took the busline running directly to the gates of the interment grounds, and carried their wreaths with them along with their faded memories, Agnes of the illusion of first love with Franzl, Marianka Huber with that remnant of kindliness at a painful moment which Nepomuck, the soldier valet, had bestowed on her the day he came with flowers for Agnes, and, later, for herself.

In the cemetery was a vast and surging living population among the dead. Women came to weep over their sons and daughters, parents and the like. . . The grave-diggers stood in earth to their hips, digging with long-handled shovels, the earth smelt damp, sweet, it carried a breath of advancing cold in its grip, odourous with the mildew of centuries past—centuries to come...still the same, sweet Mother Earth. . . .

Two of the grave-diggers passed Agnes and Ma-

rianka as they walked between and around the rows, laying the offerings of their devout hearts over the simple crosses. One of these was a hunchback, shorter than the other, his good face streaked with dirt and honest eyes gazing upon the ground, clear, open-countenanced. She looked closely at his face.....

"Isn't that Bartholomew?" she said very suddenly to Marianka, "I am sure that is Bartholomew...look, he has gotten thin and his walk is the same—he limps. . ."

Sure enough. It was Bartholomew.

"Ooh, Bartholomew," she cried, "come here, it is I—it is Agnes.... What are you doing?" He had his shovel over his shoulder. . .

Marianka was plucking weeds from a mound of the moist earth and she turned her head quickly enough to see the hunchback hesitate, then look with his clear, gray eyes at the girl before him, and she rose to her feet.

Agnes could not resist the impulse, in her joy, to kiss him, and she threw her arms around his neck with the soiled shirt collar standing half about his red throat. . . .

"Ah, Bartholomew, it's good to see you again! what are you doin'? where have you been?" . . .

He was somewhat embarrassed—

"I? I told you—what was I good for? nothin'. Nobody wanted me, everybody was taken to war—only not me. All right, I says, I'll go to the bureau an' find out... *Pfui—*" he spat, "they set me at grave diggin'—one has to eat! I'm eatin' an' the dead come in better and better every day...."

He placed his dirty, hard finger-tip on the spot where her lips had been on his cheek... He didn't know whether he would not wipe off the great surprise in this way, but it felt like a decoration...he wanted to feel it, and stroked the skin and examined his index finger minutely after each touch. This he did on the sly. . .

"You're—you're diggin' graves?" Agnes was disagreeably touched by the idea,—"you see, Marianka, he had to eat," she apologised for Bartholomew, "he was starvin'..."

"Well, somebody has to do it," he exclaimed with passion: "see here, here!" he showed her his calloused hands, his eyes began to glint unnaturally, "it's a sure thing the brain gets like the hands...I'm hard an' coarse...it don't make no diff'rence to me. It's all in a day's work, y' see..."

"Ooh, Bartholomew," was all she could say.

"An' what does anybody care? nothin'. I'm a workman."

"What happened to little Boniface?"

"I sold 'im to a clinic. I don't have food enough for myself," he said doggedly.

"He's dead?"

"Cut up!"

She shivered all over.

"What are you doin'?"

"I'm workin' with Mrs. Huber in a factory. We're makin' artificial limbs—legs an' arms—an' I tell you, business is boomin' an' they're going to enlarge the place."

Bartholomew was pleased—

"Yep, my business is pretty good too, I can tell you that...I haven't had a day off for a long time.". . .

"Well, when you do get one off, when you do, you'll come an' see us... won't you?"

"Sure I will...what's the address?"

She gave it to him on a little slip of paper....

"Come soon."

"Yes." . . .

He put the address into his pocket and stood a moment, fingering another piece of paper inside, rectangular, numbered—a new lottery ticket. . .

"I say," he commenced, "do you know that I had

a dream, thirteen was a mountain, twenty-three was a tree at the top, thirty-one was a bird in the tree, a black bird, raven——"

But he got no further. An overseer came just at that moment and laid his hand on his sleeve. There was a half-opened grave two rows away and he was required to dig it with the man already inside, shoveling the soil out of the rut, throwing it over his head, whistling, sending out tunes and the spadefulls of black loam all at one and the same time.....

"See here, I have to go..."

"...And are you still so foolish," said Agnes, "that you have to gamble?...it is a waste of money..."

"It is not! I will win, see if I don't...the drawin' comes next——"

His voice trailed off behind his body as he went with the cemetery overseer to the pit... Agnes followed them leisurely with Marianka, saw Bartholomew from a distance lower his crooked spine and legs into the yawning hollow from whence his head and shoulders protruded, looking gruesome and uncomfortable. She saw the dirt fly with the rhythm of the whistler and every now and then the shovels hit something heavy and metallic and rocks and scraps of metal were cast up. . .

Bartholomew laboured this way from morning to night. Events of the kingdom could surge about his ears, thrones could totter, armies fall,—it was all one and the same thing... And when his emperor, Franz-Josef I, died, nineteen days later, after a reign of nearly sixty-eight years, although the body of the exalted ruler lay in stately grandeur in the Hofburg Chapel of his Vienna palace, with guards of honour on four sides, wax candles dripping to light his soul to heaven, coronets at feet and crowns at the head, velvets and ermines over his bier,—the former *Ausrufer,* still sending the earth in volcanoes erupting out from the lusti-

ness of his shovel, called from his pits as if he stood on the Prater:

"Ladies and gentlemen, walk right in...the greatest performance begins just now. Please don't push, there is a place for everyone!"

XXX

REGARDING THE PROGRESS OF A FALLING BODY

To have started out with the idea of seeing the world from a romantic standpoint and to end by confinement in a convent—this was the last thing to the taste of such a Viennese born and bred as Gisella von Steinbrueck! It was distinctly naïve. It would have caused her to laugh and rail at fate if she had been anything but a Viennese. But a Viennese has a natural haughty pose that is nonchalant, not arrogant, that is pride which cannot be shaken by misfortune...that is never astounded, rebellious, crushed by reverses...which dares to do any act acceptable at the moment without regard for consequences...which has an ease of conscience that is only stifled when the time of life draws to a close and the blanket is pulled over the head... Then all goes out, like breath on a candle, without comment, question or observation, without flicker,—snuffed in a moment!

Gisella's beauty and animated manner had always strewn the atmosphere of life around as if she were the dawn coming to awaken tardy sleepers....

These did not forsake her now.

She was in a convent—the *Convento della Suore di Carita,* which is a day and a night from Venice; there were three or four middle-aged Austrian women in the same institution, also two Germans, all of good station, not exalted, and all middle-class in looks.... She was the only distinguished guest and life was very routine. Caserta is Neapolitan. A camp for the internment of prisoners of war is in the same location. Also a hospital for the care of enemy wounded, and soldiers

pass daily in the little squares of the town. So, at least, it was in 1915.

If she had been picked up—an Austrian—on the streets of Naples, her rank unknown, her clothing shabby, purse empty, she would have been allocated to this camp, scrubbed floors or mended or darned, whatever was demanded of her, and thus four years would have gone over among the families and personnel of those enemies of the *Entente* as were brought in from all directions on the declaration of war in Italy, May 23rd, 1915.... This was the "national event." Instead of a war alongside of the central empires, the Florentine state had turned traitor to her alliance, much as Jock Steers had done in parting ruthlessly from his countess and as she was forced to do in time to any principles that remained in her character after Venice had subtracted the first and the second of her grand passions. . .

That she was of noble descent and highly connected in Venice to the della Grazias, entitled her to the protection of the enemy country she was in. She was distinguished, privileged, above the rabble, could not be confined with it. . . But this segregation would have been irksome had it been in Gisella's nature to find anything irksome that her personal charms, her beauty and dashing manner could overcome.

At the head of the internment camp in Caserta was a major of infantry, suffering from muscular rheumatism, incapacitated for active service since the Tripolitan war, when he led a brigade against Turkey, in 1911, and was wounded and had never fully recovered. . .

Paolo Guasti, ardent, though middle-aged—he was probably fifty years—iron-haired and iron-willed, a capable and an amorous man, somewhat paunchy but still handsome, came as often as twice a month to inspect the conditions of the convent. He was shown

through the cells by the Mother Superior. He inspected the kitchen and even sampled the food... Then he had a talk with her, checked up the prisoners—the noble prisoners which are in every country and have to be attended to with extra benefits and care, left his commands, gave *Suore Maddalena di Gesu*[1] an order for the upkeep, which was an added item to the regular expenses, and went on his way, back to the internment camp where his twenty troopers took care of four or five hundred mediocre and assembled men and women, or to the hospital, just established to care for future wounded enemies, all under his supervision, his hand, his absolute and complete rule. Only he had to make his reports to the higher authorities, but these were in Rome. . .

Major Guasti had that Italian spirit which never seems to die in the aged roué of the Latin nature—love of a pretty and engaging woman.

Gisella saw him at the same moment he saw her and her piquancy, which no experience seemed to have dampened, won his admiration at once.

"Who is this woman?" he asked the Superior.

"A Viennese—"

"But, yes, I could see that!"

"She is the Komtessa Gisella di Steinbrueck."

"Steinbrueck?" he wrinkled his forehead beneath his upstanding white-black hair. He bit his long black moustache. "What is her position?"

"I think, excellency, you would be interested in knowing—she is the daughter of the minister of war."

"Aah!"

"The Duca della Grazia is her kinsman."

"Aah."

"She was taken from the Palazzo della Grazia and arrived only four days ago." . . .

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[1]Sister Magdalen of Jesus, the superior.

"Aah."

Well, he would interrogate this *komtessa*. . .

But Gisella, who knew everything, spoke of nothing! State secrets of her country she never revealed—*they were secrets*. Her own life—that was an open book. Contempt for the restrictions imposed by the convent—she was, however, a strict observer of all the rituals of her church—led her to give him, with especial emphasis, the full history of her adventures. . .

She was candid to the point of indelicacy. This stimulated his regard. Paolo Guasti was an ordinary soldier, raised through his service to the rank of a commander. He had a longing to seduce a countess. One excuse after another offered itself to him, he made up his mind to arrange the little details so that they could enjoy their society apart from an audience, and he made her a proposition. . .

"You naturally find this convent life very—er, regular?"

At once she saw the point.

"Now, I have an idea. We are beginning to receive Austrian wounded from the front. We have a hospital, as you know, or do not, madame, in Caserta. It is my hospital, that is, I am the commanding officer of this district of internment..." Well, she understood. "Now, madame, it is our desire to—to make everyone as comfortable as possible—under the restrictions of war. . . I am happy to say there is nothing vicious or venomous in the Neapolitan character. We have enemies and destroy them, but when the Austrian soldiers come to us with legs and arms blown off and they lay in our hospitals, they are no longer enemies at the point of a rifle, they are wounded men. . ."

She shot him a look under her lowered lashes.

Tutte le dolcesse del amore!

All the delights of love.....

The arrangement was perfect and the delighted

major of infantry appointed the Austrian countess to the position of hospital superior... She was to nurse the sick.

Of this Gisella knew nothing—not one thing... But she managed her visits so that her major was always able to make an assignation with her; she also was appointed to teach his young daughter German and French in his home. But the little *signorina* never learned one word! Gisella came and went from the convent as she pleased and became quite as independent as an Austrian subject could under the rigours of war. Had it been possible for the commandant to elope with her, he undoubtedly would have run off to Capri or Monte Carlo or some such resort.

But he could not. He did not compromise himself either but managed everything so well that this clandestine life continued twelve months without a single disappointment or a discovery. The old major thought his countess was madly in love with him when she was only playing with him as a terrier does with a rat, or a fisherman with a salmon . . .

She needed this freedom, but he—

"I knew from the very first moment you were in love with me!" he declared and fell in love with his own romancing.

And so it might have gone on for two years more, or the duration of the war. The sick came and were brought into the hospital on stretchers, where Gisella had them docketed, feeling strongly for them all the time because they were Austrians, and she gave them the best of care, having more than twenty countrywomen up from the detention camp, but she never nursed any herself... Then they were discharged as cured and made prisoners of war.

She had never been to the detention camp.

One day the order was reversed and a man was brought in from the camp to undergo hospital treat-

ment. He was stricken with a fever—the first of the malaria patients, had come in from the island of Capri, was not an officer or a soldier—had never had a uniform on his back, to be quite exact.

This young man had a very strange history, although it was very simple. He came from the family of the Grimms in lower Austria. His estates were the largest there. He had horses, rode from day to day, traveled in foreign countries, never read a book and never did an hour's service under the emperor's flag. . . In fact, he was taken in as a spy, when the very closest connection he had ever had with governmental machinery was the appearance at court of the young fellow on gala occasions when he danced with every archduchess and called them afterwards by their first names.....

Baron von Grimm bore the name of Gustav. His father was *Kriegsrath,* or a member of the war ministry of His Majesty under von Steinbrueck. But this diplomacy and statesmanship did not appeal to Gustav von Grimm nor did a military career, as he had all the horseback riding he wanted, so he merely gave the regimental examiners one word in their ears and they excused him as physically unfit. . . It is possible to do this if you have a sphere in life.

Baron von Grimm's sphere was his father's influence.

"Gustav, you should serve..."

"I don't want to serve."

"You don't have to serve!"

That excused him. His father set the example. . .

After spending his time in Paris, London and other capitals of the world, leading a very gay life, Baron von Grimm went to Capri, where he enjoyed the ultramarine shades of the beautiful Mediterranean at his feet, the equally free sky overhead, the hills, the poetry of the location of which he knew something, and had in his company a little actress from Bukharest, whom he

supported very liberally. . . The war found him here, Capri was a spies' nest. He did not go into a fort. He was a non-combatant. So they sent him to Caserta, to the internment barracks.

And here he would have remained except that malaria was introduced and he fell a victim, as he was not in a very good state of health. He had lived too high.

He was so wasted that Gisella, although she knew him well from Vienna, did not recognize him for over one month.

Then, one day, he was able to sit up, she came into the room, a mutual look of recognition passed between them!

"Welche Herzensfreude!" he cried out to her, and ironically greeted her further, as she was as vivacious as ever and yet had been caught by the toils of war the same as he and had her wings clipped, so to speak—"Ah, *Euer Gnaden, küsse die Hand! Wie kommen Sie in Gefangenschaft?!*"[1]

She told him the whole story.

"So—ah—so... and this major of cantonments, do you care for him?"

"No."

"Ha—ha." . . .

It was like her own Vienna—this meeting. Only two Austrians could talk together the way they talked—understanding everything, the lift of the eyebrow, the shrug of the shoulder, the smile on the edge of the lip. . .

"Der nimmt Dich für baare Münze,"[2] commented the *Herr Baron* jocosely, "ha-ha-ha, from the first moment he 'knew' you were in love with him! That is

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[1] "What heart's delight! (to see you.) . . . . Ah, lovely lady, I kiss your hand! How does it happen you are a prisoner?"

[2] "He takes you for real money," the genuine article.

the Italian—he is always so sure of himself—irresistible! impossible not to love him, *und so weiter. . .*"

He doctored for another month. At the end of that time she fell from grace with him. . . This slip might have been gotten over as easily as any other, because they deceived the major, Paolo Guasti, so perfectly; but she was herself made ill, was forced to confess everything, even to the loathesome pass to which the Austrian's love had brought her; and so, with this kindness from an enemy and this malevolence from a countryman, she went into a contagious ward, abandoned, sick, utterly despised and with no prospect of getting out for a whole year. . . Blood diseases are as hard to lose as they are easy to contract. One moment the damage is done. Hours, days, months and years of torture follow. . . Gisella went into a section of the civil hospital. *Ospedale dei Pelligrini,* it is called.....

In the meantime the war went on. Events followed rapidly. Thousands of Austrian prisoners were taken. The Piave and the Tagliamento became succeeding boundaries on Italy's north and the fleeing of Italian infantrymen became a thing of history as their brave recovery under cavalry leadership succeeded. . .

In Viterbo, which is near Rome, was another internment camp, a day away from Caserta, larger, more general, including all of six hundred Austrians and Germans, with their families, women, children, housed in entrenched barracks, a camp with barbed-wire fencing completely around it, and thirty guards on duty at alternating watches. . .

Twelve months of the war remained.

Like a stone falling from a tower, Gisella's descent was rapid. The stone drops faster every moment. It is a geometric conclusion that the farther it falls, the swifter, owing to the added strength of the object each foot above the last. . . Speed accelerates when

gravity pulls. Gisella started her descent from the skirt of Franz-Josef's court—the most autocratic and haughty of royalties. When she fell with Jock Steers she rode down the Semmering Pass. . . With her own cousin, she was reprehensible. He had the ear-marks of relationship—decency... Major Guasti she scandalized. Baron von Grimm implanted, what so far she had escaped, irrevocable traces of his debauchery. She was soiled. . .

What further ignobility should follow?

She had only to come into an internment camp, the barbed-wire enclosures of Viterbo this time, and the path led swifter than an eagle's flight from the crags to the ditch, the valley below, the narrow depths full of shadows that are found in great mountain ranges and into which the unwitting mountain climbers of the Swiss Alps sometimes plunge, accelerating like a stone, hurtling faster and faster with each foot of their crashing fall! Nothing can stop them. They land at the bottom. . . .

She could not stop herself. Her face was pale, as colorless now as the hair which had once been Gisella's greatest attraction. It had been golden blond, arranged like a halo, pompadoured, regal... Now it was ash-blond, a color blended of gold and silver, badly burnished, or tarnished and without a glint, the brilliancy was gone. Her eyes were heavy. She never smiled. She had a haunted look. Some desire strained in her eyes. . . She was addicted to morphine and took her dose as regularly as the doctors gave her relief with this drug... She had learned to use it in her agony after the knowledge of her infection. And she sprayed her throat regularly, came into Viterbo a cured woman, —but the stone was dropping, foot by foot, accelerating, swiftly going toward the shadows of the valley. . . .

Gisella's clothing was pathetic. She could not hope

to attract the commandant. She did not attempt to publish her rank. The commandant, if he knew it, made no comment. She did not look the part. . . She was put to the most menial labour. This work, to which she was not accustomed, proved very hard; if she could have escaped it, she would have. She would have done anything to get off her knees, leave the floors muddy and unwashed, the waste water for someone else to carry... They all did it, the camp was large, they all had to take a turn....

Outside of the barracks were small camps, a house, or, sometimes, a tent. In one of these houses fourteen Austrian officers were lodged under a heavy guard. The guard was bribed to introduce some pleasure into this closed den, this enclosure where men were restless, confined, marched out in file, according to rank, only once in the open air every day, and where their appetites had plenty of time to grow out of bounds, to become ravenous.

They demanded of the guard—

"Here are ten *lire,* you scamp, go and get somebody!"

"Who do you want?" said the guard, properly mystified by the bribe.

"Women!"

"A woman?"

"Women!" . . .

"You want——"

"Get out!" they roared at him: "here are ten more *lire*—get out!"

And he backed out only long enough to pass a word to his corporal, who was willing to take a bribe, and the corporal to the sergeant.

That is as far as it went. The women were introduced. Gisella was approached on her knees as she lay on the floor, scrubbing-brush in hand, invited to get off of them and to follow the sergeant without scruple.

Life commenced to look bearable again. . .
Two women in the company of fourteen officers!

* * * * * * * *

...In time she was no longer with officers; she passed among the Italian soldiers. . .

Now, men who could go outside of the camp for their pleasures should have been the last temptation as their actions were so irregular. . .

They were the very last.

Twelve months passed and she was by this time reduced to the most vile ill-health. She was rancid—like a little rotten apple! Gisella von Steinbrueck... the accelerating stone...dropping like a flambeau and scattering ashes as she fell!.....

The soldiers made a concubine of her, they laughed and jeered. Nothing is quite so heartless as soldiers when their country is at war and they have lost their intelligence and are acting like a machine. What one does, the others follow. Nothing is done singly, all in common. . . .

"Here, wench, I'll take a walk with you...you are my prisoner!"

He takes her out in the bushes.

"Here, drab, where have you been?"

He has a tent by the barbed-wire, near the edge of the camp, where four or five troopers are laying together....

"Here, you dirt—you filth!...come here, go there....."

Descending lower and lower...the stone hits the valley at last and would rebound, the drop is so frightful,—but there is mud in the valley bottom, so it sinks from the fall feet-deep into the slimy black ooze! . . .

XXXI

DRAGOONS!

Belgrade was the objective of the first punitive expedition going out of Vienna.

On July 27th, in 1914, directly after the declaration of war against Serbia, or coincidental with it, the Sixth Dragoons were mobilized. On the 31st they were on the train, proceeding south and then east, eager to enter King Peter's domain and make a fine carousal out of the whole invasion by drinking all the champagne in the capital city!

This is the sport of officers of the dragoons. The men have less extravagant tastes, but take their cheap wine or beer with the same gusto. . .

The hour was midnight. Franzl, after the parade of his *Escadrone* through the Mariahilferstrasse and down the Ringstrasse, went into a second-class coach where his officers sat, making themselves as comfortable as possible, buttoned in their tight blue coats, with boots on their feet reaching to their short red trousers and with swords across their laps. This uniform was used by the cavalry through the early engagements of the war and was very conspicuous. The infantry wore field gray. But the infantry was not along with them. They were the advance guard, who sometimes acted as a rear guard on retreats, when the advance guard of the enemy, also a cavalry unit, rode forward, skirmishing with them in a galloping fight. . .

Franzl was the commanding officer of the train, which included only the Fourth *Escadrone*. Altogether six of these companies formed the *Divisions Cavallerie,* what is equal to a regiment, or about nine hundred swords. The infantry division consisted of foot

regiments, each supported by its cavalry *Escadrone,* and the whole system was moved toward Serbia, intending to scatter in various units to the north and west, in order to proceed south and east. This way Serbia would be over-run, the capital taken, the state punished. . .

But when Franzl and his officers and men, who were quartered in cattle cars like their horses, reached Szekesféhervár, several hours later, after setting off in the darkest part of the night in order to escape observation, a necessary war precaution, the order was entirely reversed.

Russia had been treated to a declaration of war by Germany, France followed, Austria was pushed further into a crisis by her foreign minister and was ready to attack Russia,—so the objective of the Sixth Dragoons became Lemberg instead of Belgrade. This city is in Galicia, which is Poland, but was, before the division of empires, a part of northern Austria. . . .

The train went to Budapest on the Danube, Debreczin, and over the Carpathian Mountains into Lemberg. Here the troops dismounted. It was August 8th. They went into temporary empty barracks—the *Kaiser Franz-Josef Cavallerie Kaserne....* And now the next step was to ride to Zolkoview, where the balance of the division was waiting and a sortie was made to the north.

War had started. Thousands of men were moving in all directions. The Russians, sending out cavalry regiments, engaged the Austrians in a small town in a plain, surrounded by little rolling hills, covered with scrubby bushes and miniature woods—the town Vladimir Wolinsky, which proved to be the baptism of fire for a new generation of soldiers, a whole crop, newborn to undertake war, raised to their twentieth and thirtieth years with manoeuvers every other day of the week, as it were, and only now, owing to the scratch

of the pen on an article of diplomacy, launched upon battlefields, surrounding hills, galloping with their rifles at their shoulders and sniping at every living object over the whole plain!.....

This engagement at Vladimir Wolinsky belonged to cavalry only. It is not historic. It has no scope, a very small mortality, would scarcely, in fact, be remembered did it not mark the early enthusiasm of every one of the troops. Franzl felt the exaltation of the moment. He stood beside his horse on a small hill, with trees about him, sheltered; but he disdained these trees, he felt too safe and not heroic, so he went to the very edge of the woods and exposed himself. He thought of the glories of this heroism...he was exposing himself for Austria, his life for his country. It was like martyrdom! it was wonderful! He was thrilled all over. Fight and die...fight and die! He felt exactly like shouting at the enemy, daring him to shoot him!

But all at once a singing noise, like the snap of a metallic wire, fled past his ears... He was astonished. It was the fire of the enemy! He was enthralled... then he stepped back into the woods.

Months later, when he was in a hospital, himself at the point of death, and dying and crying men all around him, he thought of this childish attitude, the attitude of every one of the officers and the men who were stimulated by patriotic motives; then his throat contracted, he did not know whether to laugh or cry. In those early days he was so bombastic, so full of enthusiastic bravado.

His cavalry retreated. This was merely a sortie and the Russians massed at the west of the Ukraine in hordes during the early days of combat. Nothing was lost...a line is always advanced before it is withdrawn to a discreet distance and the trenches were opened to permit stale-mating, or the cessation of hostilities, over the winter. . . War does not cease in winter, it merely

relaxes to the point of mutual sufferance. Both sides feel the discomforts of ice, snow, water in the trenches; humanity is that way, it buries itself until spring.... Wars are initiated in the summer time, then the crops are harvested... man wants to camp in the open and wander, and is brave because the world looks so bright. . . When it is cold and gloomy, his assurance is not so great. Winter is fearsome, cruel... man has for centuries dreaded the cold portion of the year. . . .

When the battle of Rawaruska took place in September, both infantry and cavalry engaged. The cavalry covered the retreat of the army again, which continued almost to Krakow before the lines were formed, October and November came, and the Russians were entrenched in the province of Lublin, east of the Austrians, whose works extended north to Lodz in a straight line for about a hundred miles. . .

War is monotonous. The combatant who can show the greatest patience usually wins. Modern practice of arms consists of wearing down the enemy, not assaulting him...and until the following May, the Sixth Dragoons, their horses quartered in a small town to the rear, where they had better treatment than their riders, remained in the dugouts, well built and fortified, over the Christmas month, January, February, March and April, of 1915, succeeding. . . .

At this time their patience grew out of bounds, they were at the point, with the rest of the army, when bravado asserts itself under the warm spring sun, peril is forgotten with the winter...an advance was ordered, to drive the Russians back. The march commenced along the left bank of the Vistula to Warsaw, toward the north, which capitulated months later, in August.

This retreat is famous. It dwarfs the retreat of Napoleon from Moscow, except the suffering of the Rus-

sians was less than the French; they withdrew in wild disorder, without patriotism, leaving artillery, supplies, surrendering themselves,—a disinterested and docile mob, often more anxious to be captured and sent into prison camps, where at least a routine would take up the balance of the war period for them, than to escape. . . Whenever the officers of a regiment fell, the entire regiment gave itself up—sending over word with a flag of truce, laying down its rifles, big, strong peasants, sent into the slaughter without will of their own, merely to fire and fall. . . .

Franzl took over four thousand of these peasants in one afternoon, five at a time, marching into his camp, where he checked them off and sent them to the rear. . . The problem of caring for them became irksome. The Russian retreat continued eastward, day by day. Soon Galicia was liberated.

By fall the new line extended to Tilsit, through the Rokitno Swamps in Grodno Minsk, to Czernowitz. . . The Sixth Dragoons were in the swamp, a muddy waste-land without cities or townships, unhealthy, rained over; the water stood in puddles, the trenches were filled, filth swam in the declivities....

In this discomfort they remained for a year and a half. Between the lines was a single fresh water well. . . Over this there was fraternisation, the troops of both sides taking their turns at filling their canteens, and when the rain made the shallow trenches impossible to live in, they sat on the top, exchanging shouts but never shots, except when a general came through and then the temporary battle was over in a couple of hours, staged for his benefit, and without a death on either side if it could be helped....

This was not war. But three years had passed. No end was in sight. The western theatre was very heavily engaged, whether one alliance fell or the other depended on the western theatre. Still, reinforcements

came in to the enemy, and the Sixth Dragoons commenced a small retreat in July and August, falling back for seventy-five miles. . .

As usual, the infantry went first. Heavy artillery bombarded from both sides. A flare of shells rained over the long distance, field pieces exchanged bursting shrapnel and the Russian ten-centimeter rifle, a very accurate gun, fell among the Austrians, spreading dead and dying in the swamps!

What had been an orderly retreat was changed to chaos. All at once the water was slashed by running feet...heavy artillery lumbered along, drivers cursed horses on the field, whose legs fell into sump holes.... rifle shots sent sprays of water up in the air!....on all sides men cursed and ran, firing over their shoulders at semi-visible enemies..... The dragoons clattered after, holding back the advancers until night closed down on the scene!....

With this respite two things were discovered. These were unimportant except in as far as the Fourth *Escadrone* was concerned. And to the Fourth *Escadrone* only one was of relative importance. The bombardment continued through the night. The retreat became more orderly, it slowed up, the sprays of water shot more seldom up in the air and cries and groans were heard all over the swampy land. . .

Among the wounded lay Franzl. This was of importance to the *Escadrone.* Its commander was injured, how seriously nobody knew.... He lay all alone on his part of the field, except for two other dragoons, one dead, the other pierced through the arm, slowly bleeding and with his thick, hunchy peasant's nose turned straight down in the earth, sucking up the mud and filth as he tried to breathe!

This man was Nepomuck. His helmet had rolled off his head. His rifle was flung over his shoulder, some yards away, as he had fallen riding at full speed

to keep up with Franzl, who zigzagged, shooting backward to engage as many of the Russian riflemen as he could. . . .

Nepomuck lay perfectly still. He waited until the dragoons had passed over, barely missing his body and crashing on. . . His arm was numb. His brain was also numb. He tried to think but found that the mud and water, stopping up his nose, also got in his head; he was in danger of drowning, and as soon as nature demanded, rolled over on his side, spat out into the sump hole and coughed and rasped for a full half hour. . . In the night the shots fell off more and more, the retreat ended, star shells lit up the *terrain* from both sides, floating overhead.... a ghastly scene was uncovered!. . . And, as he lay on his side, he saw his commander, not twelve feet away, also flat on the ground, his head moving slowly back and forth, raising from his shoulders and falling again, as if he were suffering the greatest pain!

Nepomuck crawled toward his master. He was a coward. Now he forgot himself. It sometimes takes a battlefield to bring out the character of a man, especially if he feels he is a coward. . . He crawled on one arm and his knees, dragging after him his useless arm which hung like a flail without life, trailing in the mud. . . When he reached Franzl's side he saw that he was in mortal agony, taking off his belt, clinching his teeth and with a glaze over his eyes. . . .

But presently the eyes cleared. He was recognized! Franzl's wound was in the thigh, very deep and open, allowing the blood to run out in a stream... With his good arm Nepomuck reached for the belt to make a tourniquet above the wound.....but the belt would not come, his master's hand held it fast! And he moved his head from side to side, struggling to keep his consciousness, opening wide his eyes and shutting them; he finally shook off his fast settling lethargy and

reached for his servant's arm. There, lying in the pool of his own blood and the morass of the battle, Franzl fastened the belt around the arm, pulling it tight, and tighter...tighter...tighter. . . Then he fainted.

Nepomuck did not stir until the wound was bound. Then he unfastened his own belt with one hand, helped himself with his teeth and wound it around his master's leg. . .

They lay there for further hours. Yes, days passed, months, years!... no, it was only two hours. By this time the dragoons, reconnoitering from their positions in the rear of the infantry, swept over the field, the living were segregated stealthily from the dead; Nepomuck was picked up, wide-eyed, wide-awake, looking up at the moon that formed a little crescent overhead, and swung back and forth as he watched it,—and was straightened up on his feet.

There he tried to stand but toppled over, was gathered up and helped to remain upright again. . . An army doctor was on his knees beside Franzl. He watched him, with two dragoons, examine the binding he had made. . .

"Too late," he heard the doctor whisper... "it is too late. He might have been saved if I had gotten him right away. . ."

Dead! Franzl—his master—the Count von Hohenegg dead!

Nepomuck, with his knees buckling underneath him, heard the water rushing in his ears as they carried him off the field, and left that stark, staring, white face of his master pasty under the stars. . . .

XXXII

THE IRON HAND

When the war was over, in Vienna, and, in fact, all during the last years, one of the saddest sights was the horde of beggars in uniform, who solicited bread in the streets. The church of St. Stephen was a favourite place for these military wounded who were without arms or legs, sometimes one of each, blind, incapacitated for any labour and yet had life in their bodies and required to fill the stomachs to sustain this life or to die of starvation and to lie in the gutters. . . .

Stephansdom was chosen as the principal place to solicit alms, not because the people that passed in and out were any richer than anywhere else or could give bigger fees, but because a worshipper's heart is softer, it has been opened at the foot of Christ and the moment is opportune to open the purse at the same time and help some fellow mortal out of trouble.

On the 11th of November, when earth's rivers again ran silver instead of red, with the stream of all nations' blood, two beggars stood, one on each side of the portal of St. Stephen's. They were of medium height and had on military coats, their trousers were badly worn and of dark stuff, and the leg of one of these trousers belonging to the older man was hitched up and fastened above the knee, showing plainly that he had sacrificed a leg in the war. The other had his military cap at the end of a hook, which was in place of his right hand. This hook, made of metal, connected with a hinged piece continuing up the arm to the shoulder. He extended this iron hook, holding his cap, to the passersby, who dropped a coin whenever

possible into it, sometimes looking into his face and sometimes at the silver medal that was fastened on his breast.

The tolling of the great bell in the tower had brought together a large congregation on this occasion, because Kaiser Karl Franz-Josef had just abdicated his throne. This meant that an armistice was declared. The nations of the earth were suing for peace. The slaughter was at an end. Everybody could breathe with relief. The crisis was over. The church filled with women who were dressed in black, as almost everyone had lost a dear relative or a close friend. But such is the cost of war. . . .

When the church was full, aisles packed, pews overflowing, the services commenced. Cripples also entered the sanctuary. All raised their eyes. The monstrance was exposed for the benediction and the organ chanted "Silent Night....Holy Night..."

This beautiful melody passed beyond the portals, it touched the ears of the beggars outside. They looked at one another.

"Well, the war is over," said the man without a leg. "We are beggars now, the whole nation. I suppose they will strip us of the last cent, and for what? Why did I lose my leg? What is the use? What good have I done?... See, my brother, you lost your arm. Now you have an iron one. Much good may it do you...we are all starving..."

He said this bitterly and interposed his crutches before the door as the first of the congregation came out from inside:

"For God's sake, one penny! Didn't I fight for you and lose my leg in the war?" He shouted this as two women in black gowns passed out.

"So the emperor has run away," he turned again to the man with the iron hand. "Gone to Switzerland, they say. There he will live in luxury and we will live

in the streets. . Ah, that's what we get for fighting this damnable war! . . ."

The other man did not reply. He thought he was standing before a social-democrat—one of those men who paraded on the Mariahilferstrasse prior to the war and shouted "Down with the monarchy! up with labour!" He had never paid much attention to these men as he was in the employ of a great noble who at that time kept fourteen servants, rode in his own livery, waited on the emperor and attended court functions every week in the year. . . He was better off as the servant of a rich man than as a labourer for himself, so he had nothing in common with social-democracy and seldom gave rebellion or the idea of revolution a thought. . .

"Well, are you satisfied now—you, who have lost an arm?" shouted the maimed man again.... "Why didn't we all rise, throw over this beastly thing called autocracy and seat ourselves on a throne? Hey, what.... there we stood like sheep, all of a kind... They said fight—we went to fight; lay down, die—we are all on the point of dying! This is the 11th of November, 1918, and a truce is declared. All the men who were at war can come home. Everybody can say 'We lost the war, we are beaten.' We have to pay heavy indemnities; the emperor goes to Switzerland with his empress and the children, and my wife and little babies are on the street. . . Hey, what? it is a great thing—war!"

Still the man with the iron hand said nothing, and the people came more rapidly out of the church. He extended his cap and a few cents fell in. Sometimes he pointed at the silver medal for bravery on his chest. At this his neighbour laughed. He had a medal too but he never wore it.

"I'm a fool too. I never believed in war but I went and fought just the same. It is a fever that gets in the

blood. Adler was right: we should have thrown off the monarchy long ago..... Come, give me a few cents, don't be close... War will never come again!..... You know, my friend, they offer up thanksgiving that the slaughter is at an end, and all the time they will be taxed—— Will you give me a few *kronen,* they are worth nothing anyway?... Millions of *kronen* will have to be paid in taxes, the war is a costly thing. But people never realise that. They see only the great military machine that the government built up with a flourish of trumpets and with epaulettes on the shoulders—— Thank you, thank you, that will buy me bread for a week, I eat so little! . . . As I was saying—— Say, that little woman was generous. Did you see how she looked at me? with big, sad eyes. . . I'll bet you she lost her sweetheart in the war. . . . . .

"Say," he said suddenly, looking at his companion, "who are you? what company did you fight with?"

"Dragoons," said the other briefly in a thick voice.

"Dragoons? which?"

"Fourth *Escadrone,* Sixth Dragoons...."

"From Lemberg and up....."

"Yes, in the Rokitno Swamps. I got this hook there..."

"You were in the swamps? So was I. I was with the third. . . I remember—— Oh, see here, I believe they are all coming out!...."

But the exodus continued slowly because the cathedral was so full and also because the holy water fonts occupied all of the congregation.

Besides the two beggars were a score of others, hungry, tired, ragged, some without caps, some in military breeches with civilian coats. Each had a piece of a uniform, either the top or the lower, but not the whole of it, as they were long out of the trenches and had spent some months in a hospital where their clothing was discarded or worn out and other rags substituted.

They stood on the steps, lounged against the building, waiting their turn for a little contribution, talking together, discussing the poverty, the phases of defeat, the emperor's abdication...anything and everything that Vienna citizens are interested in, because the spirit had not changed—with the suffering, the filth, the mourning for father and brother—Vienna still stood for toleration, they still discussed themselves abstractedly, with a certain interest for the fate of all that had been, but neither curiosity nor abject melancholy. Only the former social-democrat continued—

"You know the worst part of this war was for the women... No matter who you are, you get on pretty good at the front. You go, expecting to be killed, but the women at home, they never think you will be killed and then, when the news comes in,—well, the women had a hard time of it.... It's for them that monuments are put up. They like to go and see their males on the stone. It's consolation...they haven't died in vain.... They are putting up a big monument to your regiment...."

"Where is that?" asked the dragoon from the Fourth *Escadrone.*

"In the Liebenberg Platz, so I heard..."

"What kind of a monument?"

"With the names of the officers and the number of swords killed. A memorial shaft, it is to stand— . . . for God's sake, a penny!...give a cent, look, I haven't got a leg! *Lieber Gott,* is that all I am worth?!" . . .

"Names of officers and number of swords killed," murmured the other to himself. "That means that his name will be——"

"What is that? were you telling me your name?" asked the other.

"No, I was saying— My name is Nepomuck Navratil, I come from Sadowa."

At this moment a great crowd came out all together,

the doorways filled, the beggars were pressed back. . . In order to extend his cap, Nepomuck held out his iron hand very stiff, it contacted with the bosom of a woman's dress; she gave a little cry, stepped back to disengage herself and came up with him, face to face. . . .

Then she gave a second cry, looked more closely at him and right and left to see if she could identify him from the throng that was passing. . . .

He looked at her likewise.

Fifty-two months had passed, more than four years, and the suffering of both had been very great...if they were to call each other by name, a further identification would be necessary. And this came at once... Another woman was behind the first and she called out—

"Why, it is you! Why are you here? what are you doing? Did you come back alone? where is—where is——"

But she got no further.

Appearance of this man, whom Agnes knew as the messenger of Franz Meier, brought her lover immediately to her mind! She felt faint, saw the crowd swimming before her, and said to her companion, who was Marianka Huber, "It is Mr. Navratil...don't you remember? he came to the Prater—a friend of Franz, but you ought to—to recall—Franz Meier, don't you know?...flowers...he brought the flowers...."

Of course!

Marianka Huber remembered everything. And she started to blush, standing there in the doorway of St. Stephen's, recalling also how he brought *her* flowers... when she was sent to prison...when there was not a friend in the whole world who cared, besides he, what became of her. . . . Tears swam into her eyes. She saw his maimed arm, the hook protruding out of the coat sleeve where a strong hand, the hand of a peasant from Sadowa, ought to have been... and she saw also that he was begging and they said to each other—

"Of course! Of course! Let us get out of here...let us go some place..."

"Let's go home," said Agnes.

"But—well—" commenced Nepomuck.

"Yes, have you any place to go?"

"No," said he, blushing.

"Come along with us..."

"No," said he, persisting.

"And why not?"

"Because—because, that would be too much...you are kind, I—it—is a long story——"

"That's just it," said Agnes at once, "I want to hear all about the regiment... Don't you see," she whispered into his ear, "I want to hear everything... Tell me, you know—was—is your friend, Franz Meier, also—is he wounded?"

The *Bursche* of the Count von Hohenegg, not having heard this name for over four years, did not recall it. He wrinkled his brow...

"Oh yes," he said finally, a painful look swimming over the bridge of his nose, into his eyes, over the cheek-bones, down to the mouth—"oh yes,—well—well——"

She stared at him fixedly.

"He is dead," said Nepomuck, dropping his eyes.

Dead!

Somehow this contingency had never occurred to her! She had thought of him as wounded, suffering perhaps, even minus a finger, a hand, but not a leg nor an arm, nor—dead! . . . .

How they started out of that crowd and why her knees did not buckle underneath her, Agnes never knew. She was weak and semi-conscious...nothing impressed her...everything was like the top of an ocean, rolling, rocking, and she took his good arm for support and laid her other hand in Marianka Huber's, and staggered across the Stephansplatz. . .

They went home, and she was thinking all the time—"Francisca will never see him—she will never see her father now...oh, how cruel...how terrible! It is impossible he is dead...that can't be, can't be. . ."

"You're sure he fell?" she asked Nepomuck pathetically.

"I saw him myself...he was so heroic. He was lying in the swamps, dying from his wound in the leg...it was high up, in the thigh and very painful. I never knew it was mortal, and even if I had—it was no use... He bound me up, lying there, bleeding there, and they took me away. . . It was night. How I remember! All was horrible, black night and we lay there watching the moon. The moon was a crescent—half a ring, you know...and it looked like it swung backward and forward. . . After many hours, I don't know yet how many, they found us. The retreat was going on, so they picked me up because I was alive, but they left him because he was dead...."

Marianka said not one word but cried with Agnes very gently and softly, listening to the story of Franz Meier's heroic death... And Agnes did not feel the tears on her own cheeks and was surprised, when she blew her nose, to see them dripping between her shaking fingers. . . .

Franzl dead! Franzl dead!

"I was sent to Gratz to the hospital," he persisted, "to lie there for about a year and nothing came further except that I lost my arm and came back here without anything, not a thing... So here I am, and that's all. . ."

Was that all? He had a medal. He had an iron hand. His face was thin and drawn. He was an object of charity.

The social-democrat was right. It was all for nothing.

And so they took him in—the women who kept the fires burning at home as long as there was coal, and,

after that, with nothing but the kindling they found on the city dumps. . .

When they climbed the flights of bare wooden stairs that led to the garret of the tenement, Marianka, the widow of Schani Huber, showed him into a tiny room that was like a cell, cheerless, empty except for a wide cot, where the ceiling sloped down on three sides and the shingle roof was so low they could jump and touch it. And she said to him, her voice quivering—or it may have been unsteady from mounting the steps one after another,—

"This place is not very nice, but it is something. The hunchback, Bartholomew Gruber, lives here. I'll talk to him an' you can share it with him. I will never forget—I—I—how you spoke to me on the Volksprater, Mister—Mister Navratil...an' those—pep—peppermint candies...."

He blushed again.

"Thanks," said Nepomuck, gratefully.....

XXXIII

"15.. 29.. 61"

He moved in at once.

But it was not with a poor man that Nepomuck Navratil, the count's man, had his lodging. . .

Bartholomew Gruber was about to have a very singular good fortune,—not one that was totally unexpected, but which nevertheless fell to him the very day upon which peace was declared, that the Emperor Karl Franz-Josef abdicated his throne, that the armies of the world laid down their arms, that Agnes and Mrs. Huber prayed in St. Stephen's Cathedral, that they met Nepomuck there by chance and took him home.

On the same day that the news of his rival's ill fortune came to Agnes' ears, the hunchback had the best of luck. He became a rich man! He—who all during the time of that rival's easy life and carefree, happy existence, ate humble bread, earned his few cents in the Wurstelprater, and gambled as many as he could scrape together weekly in the *Kaiserliche-Königliche Lotterie,* which was the government gambling license for the poor,—now pocketed a splendid fortune! The gravedigger became transformed into a rich man, as carefree and happy in his small way as the Count von Hohenegg had been in his aristocratic circles. . .

The *Kaiserliche-Königliche Lotterie* had its drawings daily in some city, varying the districts regularly through the empire. During the war period these drawings went on as usual, today in Innsbruck, tomorrow in Salzberg or Linz or Vienna, the orphan boys from the asylums did the drawing. . . so it was perfectly fair, somebody always won a fortune, somebody lost, they kept it up—some day they would win, like

Bartholomew. The privilege of conducting the booth where the money came in and went out was in the hands, by government selection, of widows, women who had been the wives of old subalterns dead in the war. . . Women of this type were in need. They belonged to the lower classes. They were old, sarcastic she-devils, perfectly honest with the government's records, but hardly so honest with their neighbours or their neighbours' affairs... They liked to gossip. The lottery counter saw the laundry of the whole district washed, sprinkled, ironed, hung out on the line, taken in, turned over, checked and made public property through the tongues of the vicious proprietress and her assistant, who knew the scandal in every family, mouthed it, sent it back and forth to the customers through their broken teeth and allowed no one the slightest charity. . . The proprietress was the social disturber of the street, the Mrs. Grundy without fear but with much reproach in the gutters. . .

On the morning of November 11th, Bartholomew made his forty-second trip to the booth on *der Wollreile*[1]. He got up in the morning feeling melancholy. He had had a bad dream. It showed him running down the street with only his night-shirt on and passing a wide ditch where two women were praying. They looked at him...he felt embarrassed. . . "Now, what am I doing here in my night-shirt?" he heard himself telling himself, and tried to run away. But then his feet were fastened to the ground; he looked up at a square building, and so forth and so on. . .

When he looked into his dream book, he saw two things: that the street was number thirty-six and the women were number four. So he looked at his latest lottery ticket which bore three numbers—he played the system that the biggest gamblers used, *Terno Secco*,

[1]street where one of the chief lottery offices was located.

which was Italian and meant "three numbers coming out"—and saw that the drawing would be over and he should have won or lost by the time he dressed himself and went to the booth. . .

He threw on his clothes, still sweating from his dream.

If he lost again, he would bet again: three numbers, four twice, as there were two women, and thirty-six for the street. . .

As he came to the *Bude*[1] all the church bells were ringing. Distinctly something must have taken place, but he stopped outside and looked at the numbers. . . Above his head on the little shop that held the fate of servant maids, sewing women, janitresses, *portiers,* labourers,—where poor men or their widows or single girls gave up all their hopes or still built air-castles,—was a sign with black letters on a yellow background, the old colours although the church bells were ringing!—

IMPERIAL AND ROYAL LOTTERY.

He did not look toward this sign. He looked nowhere, except in one direction—neither up or down or behind him. His eyes focussed straight ahead on one side of the doorway that led in where a blackboard was hanging in a great state of dilapidation. The face of the board was wormeaten by the number of little tacks that had been placed and removed, holding square tickets, each a slip of paper with a number on it. . .

He now looked at these numbers. There were two. The third had not yet been recorded. Presently the proprietress with four teeth in her head and an ugly grin that came from a choice piece of gossip or some such luxury, would make her appearance, coming out of the door with the third slip that meant life or death to so many people.

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[1]booth.

The first number was fifteen.

"15!"

He looked at it, rubbed his eyes, compared it with his number and gasped! The second was twenty-nine. . .

He had so often gambled and lost that the sight of his winning numbers made him dizzy. His eyes like plates, he stood fastened to the spot and waited for the third, his number sixty-one to come out.... and he expected this! Something told him, having won at last on two counts, that his sixty-one would be the third.....

There have been thousands of cases where gamblers who have lost consistently for ten, twelve, fifteen years, as inconsistently will win at the end of this time. They make up with one winning for all their previous losses and pocket a good balance besides. The story is too common to be exaggerated. . . every day is a heyday for some gambler...he has only to wait. Patience is the great virtue. If a gambler is an optimist, and he must be to be a gambler, his optimism will spur him on and in the end it makes him rich.

So Bartholomew. He followed the proprietress indoors with his slip in his hand. Fifteen—twenty-nine—sixty-one!

He saw himself in a small room with frightful wall-paper and a smell like a post-office. . . A counter held a ledger and receipt-books. In the corner was a safe.

What was in that safe, his money?

There was the assistant proprietress sitting on a stool. She had glasses on the end of her pimply nose. . .

"Well, you want to buy a ticket?"

"I have won," said Bartholomew.

She pulled up her nose at him—

"Let me see...."

"Here is my receipt," he said,—"you can see, it is

fifteen, twenty-nine, sixty-one...how much is the prize, please?"

"You know, Lisbeth, I don't care what's her age, she should know better. If it was the first or the second...but the fourth, *pfui*... and each by a different father! . . . Give me your ticket."

She pushed her glasses up close to her eyes, looking at the numbers...

What was he thinking of at this moment? He thought that now he had won some big sum of money he could ask Agnes to marry him and she would not refuse, as he had enough for them both.

He heard the proprietress answer the assistant, as if they were all alone in the *Bude—"Wass nötig*...how comes it, always dirtiness and filth...there ain't a cent in that family, she can't eat four times the week..."

"You speak as if you sympathised...me? I can't see but *schweinerei* in it...*sie konnt ja den mit dem puckel heirathen, auch wenn er nix hat...*"[1]

While they were not speaking of him, but in the neighbourhood, he felt uncomfortable. . .

"Hat ja nix! what do you think? he should take over little children?... it makes me sick...what a slut! look, she hasn't got milk for the third, and has a fourth one... is that decent, such a public spittoon!...."

"Now I haven't said anything...but it comes to me—"

"Ladies," interposed Bartholomew kindly, "I am waiting for my money... Is it fair to keep me waiting? who knows, I may be hungry..."

Both looked at him.

"See here, I think he has won," commenced the assistant.

"How much does it bring?" he asked eagerly.

"If you compare the numbers, it looks the same...is it possible?"

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[1]"She could marry that hunchback even if he has nothing."

"You see it is," Bartholomew insisted.

Then the proprietress sat down on the stool as the assistant got off, so that she could look at the little slip of paper to study it further. . .

A short, stout girl with her dresses very high came into the booth.

"Ah-ha, Nannie, you ain't won it...this gentleman has," said the assistant.

"How do you know what I come for? not that," said the girl. "I'm lookin' for——"

"She's lookin' for Hans Kastensteg...you don't find him here. He's by Guda Meixner...."

"It's a lie!"

"Eh-he-he..." chuckled the old woman... "you hear that, Lisbeth, she says I'm a liar an' all the town knows he's been——"

"You don't know! you just say that...it's a rotten lie, I tell you, and it's wrong for you to repeat it."

"Repeat it—he-he...what a story-teller now, an' the girl as big as a house...."

"It wasn't him."

"She came by it honestly, I guess?" . . .

Still Bartholomew did not know what he had won.

The proprietress put in a word or two, all three started quarreling... he commenced to wonder whether his receipt would disappear in the midst of the row.

It took him, in all, half a day to collect his money. He bought another chance on the numbers he had dreamed. They were still wrangling with more scandal when he left, and he pocketed sixty thousand *kronen,* the most he had ever seen in his life, placing part in each pocket of his clothing, and left to see why the church bells had been ringing all the day. . .

This was not hard to find out... Peace had been determined on in an armistice. Commotion ruled the whole town. He did not know where he was with so

much celebration and found the shops half closed, half open.

His first thoughts were to spend some of his money. It does not take long to spend money. Bartholomew found he had a good welcome everywhere. The shopkeepers sold him packages of all kinds, fruits, candies, nuts, some new fine clothing from top to toe so he looked like a prince *incognito,* only his hunch stuck out so prominently behind between his shoulder blades. . . .

Bartholomew bought one thing, besides his clothes, for himself. This was a little revolver. He felt safer with the protection in his pocket; he was a rich man, might be robbed, certainly had to take precautions.... And so, when he arrived back in the place he called home, it was night time, another man was in his bed—a part of it, at least—and he knocked and was admitted at the room across the narrow top story, namely the larger room housing Agnes, Marianka, Aurora Rossreiter, asthmatic as usual, and little Francisca, asleep in her single blanket, wrapped very tightly like a ball and just three and a half years old. . .

"Ladies, here I am!" cried out the hunchback, entering elaborately and turning in fast circles on his toes, displaying himself from all sides... "See me as I am. I have won a fortune and have new clothes. . ."

"Bartholomew!" cried Agnes.

Marianka's eyes stuck out of her head.

Mrs. Rossreiter wheezed for a full minute and then managed to say—"Well, thank goodness, somebuddy's had some luck... I ain't heard nothin' but ill tales all day...."

"What bad news?" he asked anxiously...

"Agnes' baby's father's dead...died at the war front. They've lost their jobs...nobuddy's got any real luck, 'ceptin' you, it seems, Mister Gruber."

Now he turned his eyes on Agnes and saw she was hollow-eyed and worn. His heart rose in sympathy...

Many things swam over him at once, her face with its brave smile summoned up to reassure him, her pathetic eyes downcast, his good fortune which meant his ability to give her all comforts in life, the death of Franz Meier, as he knew him, that opened the way for his own happiness. . .

Then his eyes fell, he felt shy, offered his little sweetmeats and knick-knacks with some confusion. But presently all was straightened out.

"Didn't I always say I'd win!" he said triumphantly... "an' when I win, you win," he managed to murmur into Agnes' ear... "remember, I told you... I got somethin' else for you, Agnes...you know what it is?"

She shook her head.

"Guess?"

She could not guess.

"Well—" he looked about him, "it's this... if—if you'll come and look out of the window, I'll show you."

Obediently she went to the window.

Far off the lights shone in the Prater... The *Riesenrad,* mute and still, yet had its outlines painted against the sky by little electric torches. . .

She looked at this. She felt her hand taken. The room itself became dim with only the presence of Bartholomew beside her...and she experienced a nameless fear, a fear that spent itself as soon as it came, his light touch on her palm was so kind... Then he slipped something on to her third finger and kissed it and blessed it, tremblingly, as he held it there. . .

"I love you, Agnes...I never said nothin' to you for I knew that you loved—him. . . but now that he's gone, I'm tellin' you...."

There was the *Riesenrad.* And beneath the great wheel was her park, full of lilac blossoms and acacia in the summer... There was the garden of her little romance, the dream of a day and a night. . .

"I've got money enough to go into partnership with

Mrs. Rossreiter...we'll go back to the Prater... The war's over, I'm well-to-do...we'll hear the noise, the people, the music...all of it over again..." his voice went on caressing her. . . The two in the room who were outsiders to this conversation discreetly closed their ears and eyes.

"You'll be so happy, so very, very happy..." he kissed her hair and her hands... Slowly she turned her face to his. "Then—you want to?"

Now she looked at him through her tears...nodded faintly and was embraced....

Oh yes, the swallows would come again and the *Riesenrad* would revolve. And the merry-go-round would be opened in springtime to go 'round and 'round and 'round. . .

XXXIV

NICKI, RUDI AND EITEL

When February came a great many changes had taken place. Where the proud Swiss door—the ancient *Schweizertor* of the Hofburg—stood with its two columns, single arch and imperial coat-of-arms above, was now a sign reading "WARENLAGER." This door was the finest relic in Vienna and had a history all its own, dating from the year 800. Still, trade, commercialism, a revolutionary atmosphere had made a warehouse of it where furniture was stored... Men in working clothes carried an arm-chair and a piano and bedroom furniture and so on into the palace, as business of moving determined; and before the arch, in place of soldiers, several children were playing, screaming as they bombarded each other with snow-balls. . .

The day was bitter cold... snow fell at intervals. The Hercules statues[1] were coated with ice. Ice floated in the Danube Channel, the Iron Man on the city hall was invisible in the downfall, and on the ground were several inches of the soft white carpet which accompanies low temperatures, but not too low to precipitate. . .

In this uncertain weather, clearing and obscuring, it was yet necessary to sweep the streets, to encourage traffic, to keep up the commerce of a city. Men with shovels and horses dragging wagons, appeared. They shovelled up the snow, cleared the gutters. . . The sewage system must not be hampered. They emptied drain holes, opened the car tracks. . .

When they came to the Hofburg there were two wagons, half-filled, and four men, as two is a crew. . . As the shovels scraped, the snow went into little

[1]four colossal statues of Hercules on the new palace gate.

mounds... soon these would be stacks or mountains if they were not reduced, and so the men lifted them by heaving up on a grand scale and spilling the shovelfulls into their carts, which would drag them away.

At the same time that this shovelling was going on, another institution associated with winter took place also in the vicinity. This is the business carried on by little merchants, each one for himself and on the most diminutive scale—that of chestnut roasting. A single little caldron or chestnut roaster is used; the nuts lie on the coals until their jackets burst open, when the merchant, who stamps his feet to warm himself in the snow or beats his breast with his arms or clasps his naked ears, shivering, peels off half the outer coat, lays them with the kernel exposed back among the ashes and waits for his customers... Sometimes sixty *kronen* are made in this way in a day, enough to pay at the rate of exchange for a bed and a meal; the rest of the time the digestive tract is left idle. . .

And so it happened on this day when the snow-shovellers were working before the *Schweitzertor* of the former palace that a chestnut roaster stood by the archway. His long coat was frayed and badly soiled, the boots of an officer of uhlans were on his feet, his ears were red under his service cap. . . These ears were very protrusive, sticking out from his head, but not in an ugly manner. Still they were poor ears to have fastened to the head in this sort of weather because they stopped the wind, froze gently and gave the tympanum inside much pain. . .

The man had sea-blue eyes. His hair was clipped in the cavalry manner, that is, there was none around the ears... and there he stood, stomping, turning over the little chestnuts, whistling into the air and trying to attract a buyer from among the stray populace tramping by him. . .

Among the snow-shovellers was a man of prodigious

strength. He threw twice as much snow from his instrument into the wagons as any man around him. While he did this he gave out a grunt, rhythmically, wrinkled up his forehead, which would have been seen to correspond with his kinky hair underneath his fur cap, if the hair were not covered and out of sight... This man also clucked to the horses as if he understood them, took them by the bridles, backed them and led them forward. . .

"Now, see here, take your wagon over to the new palace gate," he said to the other driver, as he commanded one of the wagons... "I'll come after, I want to buy some chestnuts..."

He placed his index finger against his nostril and blew his nose into the snow. Then he walked away, toward the chestnut roaster, swinging his shovel as if it were a twig. . .

"Give me two cents of chestnuts," he said to the little business man. "Pick them clean... my God, what a cold hour, the thermometer is falling. . ."

"Hello, Nicki!" said the other man, "what are you doing here? where did you come from? are you shovelling snow?!" . . .

"Rudi," said Nicki, "positively you gave me a shock! Yes, my friend, it is I..."

"And I, I."

"So we are both working men!"

Rudi burst out laughing. . .

"I fought——"

They both commenced to tell each other their experiences. . . where they fought, how they fought, who was alive, who dead, how Rudi lost two fingers of his right hand, which were missing, how Nicki was shell-shocked and lost the sight of his right eye.

Here they were, labouring at their different occupations and both wiped clean in the struggle of Austria for democracy, estates forfeited, without means to keep

up city residences, and both good-natured, perfectly composed, wearing a smile and showing teeth, puttering about in the snow and shaking hands over a chestnut roaster.

"*Und, mein lieber Freund,*" said Nicki,—"have you heard the latest about Eitel?..."

"No, I have not," said Rudi.

"Well, he is a shoe-polisher..."

"What?!"

"Ha-ha-ha..."

"No."

"Yes."

"Eitel, Prince Hochmut!"

"It is so."

"Where?"

"In the Metropole... he stands there, morning and night. You see him every day. Yesterday, when I cleared off the manure from the streets in front of the hotel—it was not snowing yet,—there he was inside the glass doors of the basement... I saw him through the panes. He has his glass in his eye and his gloves covering his dainty hands, but it is the same polishing that any *Schuhputzer*[1] does.... He cuts the fingers off his gloves, ha-ha-ha!... And yesterday there was a little Jew sitting on the chair with a kaftan. The kind of Jew he used to wiggle his fingers at the nose to. And the prince puts his nose aside—so, so he should not smell the garlic, and shines the Jew's shoes. . .

"It's a great life... He also stands by the windows, when the chair is empty, and sees the women outside. They go past and he looks after. Now he can only look, he has no more money than you or me—ha-ha-ha!" . . .

"Well, I must see Eitel."

"By all means."

"And Franzl, Nicki?"

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[1]shoe-shiner.

"Ah, Franzl,—that's a different matter, my friend. Franzl is dead."

"When? how?"

"He fell at Rokitno—before the Russians..."

"Is it possible!"

"Yes. You know how I know?"

"No."

"Well, you see it on the monument. Go over to the Liebenberg Platz where the shaft has just been erected to commemorate those brave fellows of the Sixth Dragoons. There you see his name, in brass against the stone, FRANZ MAXMILLIAN VON HOHENEGG, captain Imperial and Royal Sixth Dragoons. It's a sad sight... Well, good-bye, I have to go after my snow-wagon or I lose my job... Good-bye, I know where to find you, maybe we will see each other again..."

"Here, take your chestnuts!" Rudi called after...

"Ha-ha-ha..."

As Nicki turned his back and started away with long strides, he encountered a woman who was standing a dozen yards from the *Schweitzertor,* her legs wrapped and bound in newspapers, a child by the hand whose legs were similarly wrapped, and who carried in her tiny little mitten a single large full-blown white rose. . .

"Were you looking for someone?" said Nicki politely. He never forgot his courtly manners. And, besides, the woman was young and poorly dressed but very pretty. . .

"I am lookin' for the monument to the Sixth Dragoons," said the lady in a low voice...

"It is on the Liebenberg Platz... go over three blocks to the right, then one so and one so..." he pointed with his shovel.

"I know." She knew the locations in Vienna perfectly.

"Well—have a chestnut...for your little baby!" of-

fered Nicki graciously. In this way he detained her, but it came to nothing. He was acting from long habit, a beautiful face, distress.... But the war was over, he was no longer the condescending nobleman, but a simple workman in working clothes trying to make a living. . .

So she thanked him. He looked familiar to her, she couldn't place him and departed....

Rudi, who had watched the by-play, now passed a wink over his shoulder to Nicki...

"Sehr lieb!"[1]

"Tres jolie!

"La-la-la..."

The woman went on. If Nicki had recognised her by association he would have seen the merry-go-round before him, the swarming crowds of the Prater, the vision of Schani Huber, now dead, standing before his *Ringelspiel* and Franzl and Fanny and Mitzerl and Rudi and himself all sitting on horses that were as inanimate as clay until the organ started playing. This little girl at the organ set everything in motion. It was the signal, brought about by the sign from the *Ausrufer* who was Huber, and around they went—like life!—spinning, going up and down, galloping unnaturally over the same spots for ten minutes and arriving in a different location, because events upset kingdoms, throw governments in the air, make the poor rich, rich poor and so on and so further. . . .

This he would have seen. But he didn't recognise her. It made no difference. She was not looking for him or for his companion, Rudi. Her thoughts were on the Liebenberg Monument, erected to commemorate the Sixth Dragoons, and she bent her footsteps that way.

Nepomuck had told Agnes of this *Denkmal*[2]. The

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[1]"Very nice!"

[2]literally, think-reminder, memorial column or statue.

social-democrat before the St. Stephen's Cathedral had told him... She set out—snow meant nothing, tramping about in cold weather was preferable to sitting without occupation in her chill room... Francisca by the hand, she brought her before the square enormous shaft, as white as the snow and ice of winter, as cold, as cheerless, as significant of death, disaster, turmoil. . .

Now it stood silent and opaque.

About the base, which widened in a great rectangle, were four stark posts at the corners and chains between, running around the monument at several feet distance. The chains sagged in the middle, which is the nature of heavy metal, forming a swinging arc, concavely... only now the chains were still, laden with at least three inches of flakey, dry snow balancing, immune to a breath of air, and giving the appearance of ribbons, stretching like a decoration. Within this square were wreaths half-buried by the drift of frozen water, the badges and silk streamers painting the background all colours as the dyes ran out, melting with the snow. Their flowers were withered and dry... Whatever societies had sent these floral offerings, now the winter was sweeping over them, they were becoming effaced, and in thirty days the cenotaph would be as ancient in the minds of the Vienna populace as Radetzky, Prince Eugène of Savoy, Schwartzenberg and Archduke Charles, or Schwind or Anzengruber or any of the rest of them. . . .

Agnes stood as silent as the stone and looked upon its face...

There was his name: FRANZ MAXMILLIAN VON HOHENEGG...

There it was—cold, immutable... His marble form could not have been more terrifying! She felt her heart tremble in her bosom....

"Francisca," she said hoarsely, timorously, "darling..." She clutched her to her breast, lifted her up

so she could see the name... "That is your father's name... see, it is written. That says, Franz Maxmillian von Hohenegg... can you see?"

"Yes, mudder," said the little girl...

"Little letters...one after the other..."

The child looked at her with wide eyes—

"Dat 'is name, mudder dear?"

"Yes, sweetheart."

"What's it doin' dere?"

"The people put it there because he died..."

"In da war?"

"Yes, Francisca."

"Fightin'?... whatcha cryin' for, mudder?"

"Take your white rose, darling, and go under the chains... lay it there—right where you see the big bouquets..."

Under the chains she went and the snow fell on her little cap.

The city was bustling around. The feet of the multitude crunched the sidewalks,—passing each other in narrow files where a pathway was worn... The sky remained leaden, but the snow had ceased falling; only the white rose lay, like a crystal messenger from Heaven, among the pigments, red and blue and purple, but mostly red! spreading from the ribbons into nature's blanket at the foot of the Liebenberg Memorial. . .

XXXV

PROFITEERS

The jewels of the Countess Gisella, which accompanied Jock Steers from the moment that the unfortunate lady handed them to him before her house, before the war, during the war took a very peculiar mission on themselves. The mission was associated with Jock Steers. He had his little love affair with their mistress, then with "Annie," the nondescript character from the *Caffe Martin;* and Jock continued his career of silly amours, commencing with this girl where he left off with the countess, to a chambermaid in the hotel, several women outside, a harlot, a little stray kitten from a dark alley in the same district, a laundress...and from there, the idea came to him that he could very valuably use his time if he backed it with money in America....

America was the land of rapid fortunes.

He sailed from Venice. . .

Now, a man who carries on his person ninety thousand dollars' worth of jewels with the purpose of multiplying this sum by twelve, can very well do so if he understands a trade.

The horseman's trade is one of international calibre. He could play race-horse man on innumerable tracks in the States if he wanted to. But this was not Jock's purpose.

He thought of something else. The boat, docking in Philadelphia, brought him in touch with Maryland. The race-track here is Pimlico...thither he went.

But he had no sooner gotten there than events changed his mind. He did not hazard one dollar on the tracks. His English came back to him, connections before he left the *Freudenau* in Vienna under the von

Steinbrueck livery, and he met here a man who was formerly a part of the earl of C——'s stable, the very one to which he was attached as a trainer, horse-washer and utility man. . .

Jock met this man in the paddock at Pimlico... He had always called him Rusty, an old man, honest at the boot-heels but corrupt all the way up!

Rusty called him Jock and shook his hand. His own was horny, made of leather like his face, and said to him—

"Out of a job, are you? Fell in soft, didja? where d'ja git them diamon's now?" . . .

Jock had them in his neck-tie, on both hands and on the top of his walking stick. He also wore Gisella's chatelaine with sapphires along the top in his pocket as a purse. He had her cigar-case engraved with his own initials. The blue stone was converted into cash—in his pockets, like the balance of her casket. . .

"Aw," he said, "things broke right... I'm a rich man. Say, Rusty, this Uncle Towser's scratched...they tell me he was a great hoss."

"Great? Sure...too good t' run...couldn't 'andicap 'im enough...I say, Jock,—now lisson...I ain't h'askin' ya for a touch, I don't want no charities... I'm thinkin', —'ell! if I 'ad some money or could git some, I'd make 'em all look sick. See now, I got a scheme...want to 'ear it? Come over with me—gimme a chanct to talk... this 'ere game o' race-'osses is a joke...a piker game. I got a bigger one, somethin' in your line..... wanna play me?"

"How much? what is it?"

"Lissun... them countries, Hingland, France, the Dutch—they're all at war, hey?"

"Well..."

"They got buyers in this countree, wantin' supplies—get me?"

"Sure..."

"Well, 'osses is one o' them things which ev'ry countree's gotta 'ave, hey? Now look 'ere, say we know where t' git 'em, you kin sell ev'ry 'oss you kin git an' the money's like takin' pap from babies...."

"Where'd you get the 'orses?"

"Montana."

"Where's that at?"

"Western United States. Two thousan' miles from 'ere..."

"You know how t' get there?"

"Sure...take a train."

"What do they want for 'em?" . . .

"Nothin'... next t' nothin'... three, four dollars apiece... I got the tip from a tout what's gone broke... he thought I could clean up here and go into business with 'im, but I'm flat... we'll go it three ways. You put up the kale, I go west, he sells 'em to the French an' we splits..."

"At three dollars apiece what do you get from the French agent?"

"Seventeen dollars! a pipe! wot t' hell, we make thirteen dollars on every 'ead, and the French boz, they rides the dam' skunks into the trenches! What th' hell do we care what they does with 'em... they only lasts a day on the battlefield h'anyway... But the more the merrier, says I...we makes, lose or gain..."

Jock Steers thought this proposition over. Finally he came to the conclusion that he didn't need Rusty, he didn't need the "tout" that had the French connection; he could spring this connection himself. And so he did what so many other "profiteers" did, who got the tips on which they built their fortunes from their best friends,—he cut the "best friend" out, went over his head, around his neck and dipped his hand into his intellectual pocket. . .

Money talks... He took the first train for Montana. At Bozeman he hopped off the train, took a trip out

to one of the big ranches and commenced to deal in horse-flesh. He picked these third-string cayuses up for three dollars apiece on a flat deal of twelve thousand head to commence with.

Now, having laid down thirty-six thousand dollars, he had the lean ones assorted from the fat, sent the sleek ones east on four trains of box-cars, properly fed, to a New Jersey stockade, paid a feed bill for those left behind to fatten and took his own Pullman to New York City.

Jock's ideas of profiteering here took on a more subtle form...

He had the horse-flesh, he could talk... The French consulate was only too glad to send him an expert. Artillery is brought to the war front by horse-power, after it is unloaded from railroads, so these Montana quadrupeds were in demand. He could have sold to the Belgians, Serbs or Russians... He chose the French because he had a good tip and besides he had an idea, which was to corrupt somebody and which he understood could be worked on the French... They were a republic, had graft, officials who took bribes and stirred them with sentiment to form patriotism....

So he went to the French.

Now, the consul sent him a very good expert. His name was René Saval. He was a captain in the Fifth Hussars of Nancy, a middle-aged man, incorruptible, unmarried, able to live on his salary, had lost his grandfather in 1815 and two uncles in 1870, and had no desire to do any sharp dealing outside of his official business,—which honour gave the horse-dealer from England something of a shock!

He, therefore, hit upon still another variation of this subtle scheme... The horses, bought for seventeen dollars per head, were consigned to French bottoms... The "Rochambeau" of the *Fédération Internationale Transatlantique,* sailing to Bordeaux, took the first

consignment over... and with this boat he perpetrated the first of his daring outrages toward the *Entente* to which, by virtue of his birth, he was indebted for citizenship. . .

He corrupted the purser of the "Rochambeau!"

One thousand head of fattened horse-flesh were driven from their stockades to the pier of the ship... The purser, with his pencil and pad, stood on one side of the gangplank; the expert, Captain Saval, incorruptible gentleman of France, opposite him, likewise with a pad and pencil... The ship was to carry three thousand head of the Steers' purchase to Bordeaux. The checking began....

The horses ran onto the ship, were herded in the hold, an opening, equally wide with the entrance, was provided on the other side of the ship where she lay in the Hudson River, and at this exposed side was a barge large enough to accomodate a hundred of the herd. . . As the horses went in, they came out! The purser knew it; he arranged for the transfer aboard the barge. The expert did not know it, Saval was deceived. . . The barge was towed to a landing two hundred feet below and out of sight of the expert, where the cargo was transferred back to the stockade, the horses went on the pier again and the expert checked them off in good faith. . .

When one thousand were actually on board the "Rochambeau," three thousand were accounted for. The ship lifted anchor. Overseas they went. On arrival in Bordeaux the purser made his report—

"On account of heavy storms encountered in mid-ocean, two thousand head of the herd loaded at Hoboken, New Jersey, which numbered three thousand at port of lading, died aboard ship and were buried at sea." . . .

This report was official. It sufficed to cover the deficiency and the purser and Jock Steers divided the

difference between one and three thousands, multiplied by seventeen and expressed in terms of horse-flesh.

It does not take a man long to get rich when he originates such schemes. Honour, for such a man, is only another word in the dictionary... He is a thief by choice and a profiteer by courtesy....

Such men are not always prosecuted. Jock Steers did not get caught, the purser made himself an eventual power in France by buying a shipping line with his profit, and the animals overseas simply went into the trenches and stayed there!

Rats were found in the trenches later on, fat, audacious rodents that over-ran half the eastern provinces, glutted with horse-flesh, putrid and destructible... But all this mattered very little to the man who gained a single object—wealth from the source of Vienna, from the von Steinbrueck heirlooms, propagated on American soil to grow a fine new family tree....

He had the audacity—which vied with the rats of France—to return to Vienna as soon as hostilities ended and there to buy up a very fine residence. The *palais* stood on Auerspergstrasse, No. 10,—the former home of the von Hoheneggs... He did this out of sentiment, for he never forgot that the fiancée of this man was responsible for the foundation of his fortune....

He bought himself a splendid *Daimler* car, mounted by a footman and a driver in livery. He copied the ancient aristocrats in everything, except that he could never learn to dress like a gentleman. He remained to his dying day in checked suitings, with a heavy gold chain over his stomach attached to his watch, a neck-tie pin built in the form of a horse-shoe, with a diamond set in at each nail, a long, black cigar in his mouth now at the underworld angle and rings on his heavy, misshapen and carefully manicured hands. . . .

This was Jock Steers, millionaire autocrat. . . The

von Hohenegg crest was over his door, engraved above his initials in a large gold flare on the side of his automobile. When he went driving the beggars got out of his way, because he trampled on them in his autocracy... he could not be expected to see what was beneath his eye—a man with twelve millions of dollars!....

And one day he was called to the ministry of public instruction and offered the opportunity of endowing a chair at the university which was to teach diplomacy, or the art of keeping the world's peace. . .

"Now, I may as well show myself," thought Jock. "Peace is a great thing. I hope it lasts. I wanna keep what I got!"

So he ordered his *Daimler* car and the chauffeur and footman in livery. He came out of his house as his *portier* opened the door. He crossed to mount the machine and saw a man curiously looking at him from the gutter. . . The man was tall and thin, very sallow and looked as if he had undergone much suffering. . .

Although this man only had two *kronen* in his pockets, he did not ask for charity. He simply stood, muffled to his chin in a faded ulster, because it was a cold day and the snow was on the ground, and his eyes roamed greedily over the number—10, Auersperg-strasse—on the house front... He looked as well at the Atlas statues, freshly cleaned and scoured, at the *portier,* the lamps, the gratings on the windows. His hat was pulled over his eyes and he peered at the horsey individual coming out of the great mansion and stepping into his livery....

Now the vehicle started. A cloud of the heavy, yellow smoke of the exhaust burst directly into the man's face...it enveloped him, he was blotted from view! At the same time the Austrian *Daimler* car withdrew in the distance.....

XXXVI

ALL THE WORLD WAS COLD

As her jewels travelled from hand to hand, Gisella did likewise. In the end she wrote her father for funds, but the letter, addressed to him from Viterbo on the day she was released from internment, fell into the hands of Katinka Komirsky, which was Madame Elvira's real name, but which she had by this time exchanged for Madame the Countess Conrad von Steinbrueck, under the respectable guise of democracy which swept over the empire. . .

Married women became widows; single women with a past exchanged the past for a future and were looked upon as Austria's best representation under her new state; and so, living now at 14, Obere Augartenstrasse, where he had fled with his possessions, the former war minister gave up his *palais* on Bartensteingasse, saw it crumble to decay, carry a sign *"Zu Vermieten,"* meaning "To Rent," felt his own bones crumble, became a victim of locomotor ataxia, a dread disease, and saw himself condemned toward his declining years to the confines of a rolling chair. . .

Here he played the perfect baby. And Elvira, the consummate actress that she was, devoted herself to his service by attending to his fortune. She managed very well. She had accomplished her aim in life. She bore a title, wore a smug look, administered goodly sums—a royal income!—was free to go about as she pleased, as the old reprobate, held fast as in a vice, was able neither to squirm nor protest, from his illness.

So the communication from Gisella fell into her stepmother's hands....

Elvira smiled a shrewd smile. She made a neat blaze

in her boudoir mantelpiece of the letter, fanned the flame with her hand. . .

"I'm afraid we shall never see the *Komtesse* Gisella again," she said to old Steinbrueck.

"Eh?" he replied.

"I mean she has taken leave of this world."

"Eh?"

"She's dead!" . . .

Well, he was not disturbed. It was a fitting end.

"Tell Ludwig to make my punches better... I feel cold all through, don't you think the window should be closed?...I am catching pneumonia... Come, mamsy. —papsy wants a little petting, hey...." and he chuckled all over as if his dotage were a new-birth, he was so childish. . .

"Come, be a good boy," she patted his hand, "then we'll go on the merry-go-round, I promise you—we'll go down to the Prater some day soon...."

And on this promise he lived. . .

Meanwhile, Gisella, finding the door from home closed to her for sustenance, turned to the one source she was able to reach—her relatives' bounty in Venice. . . She wrote, appealing to the Duca della Grazia. He knew her story. He was aghast at her connection with his house. . . He returned from the Italian war front determined that all ties should be severed with Austria, sentimentally as well as politically, so he sent her five hundred *lire,* regretted her past with *hauteur;* she took the money gratefully, the hint to begone! and a train for Vienna all at one and the same time.

And so she was in Austria, going over the Semmering where she had taken her first step into an orgy of life!... The pass was almost snowbound... it was midwinter. The Roxalpe was white from foot to crest, a shimmering, frosted tower in the sunlight... But soon the sun was overcast. Again the sky became leaden.

All the beauty of the vast Alps, sliced to make a causeway for her train, became veiled... She saw nothing but tumbling flakes, without object, without destination, little particles of dry snow which February always brings to the Semmering, as agitated and unbridled as her own life, flashing past her window pane, depositing stray particles in a frost against the glass and descending into the valleys.

When she came into the Südbahnhof, Vienna was wrapped in snow. It was the hour of high noon. She rubbed her eyes to make sure she was there. . . Nothing appeared natural, everything was topsy-turvy. Maybe this was due to the war or to the winter month of February, which, in this particular year, had an extremely severe snow storm... But certainly she had difficulty to find her way about. . .

Gisella was not altogether in responsible health. Her body was emaciated. Her clothing was in a fearful state, shoes broken and sunken at the heels, her hair was streaming and disorderly under a hat, very cheap, very worn, shapeless, out of fashion, and the long skirt was too full, the jacket too tight. . . Even her gloves were cotton and unmended. . .

She had no apparent destination and walked about aimlessly. The cold was intense but she was too dazed to notice it... Something had happened to her brain. It was very sluggish, like a river that has become dammed up... Floating particles obscured each thought. Presently she forgot to think and walked along the Favoriten Strasse where it joined the Wiedner Haupt Strasse as if she were promenading after a night of carousel, drunkenly, swinging from side to side of the wide street, with a song she learned in Venice on her lips. . .

How long she wandered this way she had no record of... The Kaisergarten was before her, with heaps and heaps of snow. Some snowballs hit her hat. She re-

membered taking off her hat and putting it under her arm to protect it... Then there was a wild laugh... she looked about... two boys with a long sled were bombarding her and rolling in the snow after every safe hit.

She found herself in the Burg Ring, very tired, and sat down. The snow shovellers were working and the curbing was free. The benches and steps of the Maria-Theresa Monument were buried so that little mountains rose through the parks here and there and the horsemen on their silent mounts at the foot of the statue, as well as the empress' figure, were completely hidden from view. . . This reminded her of a blanket drawn up to the chin and she laughed heartily. Then Gisella suddenly got to her feet, feeling very stiff and hungry. Why had she no destination—no end in view? She did not care if she slept or not. Where was she going? why had she come here?

Where was she?

In the end she forgot where she was. . .

Then the wandering continued. Up one street and down the other, always muttering, having her hat in her hand. Everybody looked at her. Busy business men hesitated, people jostled her. She was in everybody's way. . . And still she had no place to go. It did not dawn on her to seek her house. She had no house. All was vacant—an empty vista—snow... snow... snow...

By the time three o'clock had come she had wandered into the Volksgarten. She was desperately hungry. Where should she go to eat? Numbly she felt in her purse, a black hand-satchel that had nothing in it beside the end of her ticket from Viterbo, which she had carefully preserved, for what purpose was not evident. . . But she had to eat!

Ah, now she knew how to get money. She would stop some passerby...

She tried to do this...

What did she want? A ragged creature like this—did she think she could solicit men?... a derisive laugh followed her... She heard it, thought it was very funny and laughed along. . . The poor creature arrived by chance, simply in her wandering, in the Bartensteingasse. . . She was now one block from her former home and came up to it in time to pass a young French officer who had a fashionable stick in his hand, gloves and a cigarette. . . He had his cap set at a jaunty angle and the number seven, some distinguishing mark that belonged to his company or regiment, was perched on the very peak.

For the first time Gisella, the Countess von Steinbrueck, realized where she was—in the city of Vienna! home! But her home was for rent. It was in as pitiable a condition as herself, the window-panes of the ground floor broken and the shutters hanging loose from their hinges. Her crest was half demolished. Vandals had despoiled what was one of the finest government residences of the old Vienna—the city before the war—the *Kaiserstadt—Wien!*

And so she looked at it and leaned against the lightpost to solicit the young officer... She hummed a tune under her breath, signalled him as he was determined to pass, and finally did so with a low laugh. . . And now followed two American officers, also trimly dressed, with overseas caps on their heads and fine polished boots... She stood in their way. They looked at her as if she were a freak...

"Look what's kidding us," the younger one said to the older... "Looks like the streets here were full of those kind... why don't the police look after them?..."

Shortly the police did. An officer touched her arm—a policeman in the new republic's uniform, a sword slicing through his overcoat pocket and showing above his shoe tops—

"Move on, my fine lady... keep on moving. We don't allow loitering here. You know where you are? Don't try any of your ladylike tricks either... it ain't done, that's what. . ."

Such brutality only left her cold. She was uncertain how to proceed so followed in the direction the officer had pointed out. It led her to Schmerling Platz, where a dog-catcher in a small cart had just crunched through the snow and picked up a stray puppy. hiding under the shadow of the Palace of Justice, which stands across the way... He gave her a glance, carrying the whining puppy in his hands.

She called to him.

"What do you want?"

"Take me with you..."

"Where?"

"Where you are going," pleaded Gisella... "I want some—some—it is so cold...."

He looked her steadily in the face, the puppy kicking in his hands, and shook his head—

"I ain't pickin' up women," he said. . .

And so she was through. There was no place to go. . .

Yes, only one. She would come to that presently. She lost herself for another hour. . . The snow had not fallen since she came into the Südbahnhof. Now it started again, first finely, stinging her cheeks; then commenced to grow with each flake, until the air was swimming like a vast desert whipped by a sand-storm, only the flakes fell lightly. They coaxed her to slumber...she felt just like lying down there—wherever she was—in the billowy bed and drowsing off. . . Day was so long. Still night commenced to fall. It was yet early, but by five the sky was overcast, visibility low; she had crossed the entire inner Ring, could not understand why she felt no pain except that the soft downpour absorbed the cold and her blood circulated slug-

gishly from walking. She had sat down and gotten up innumerable times. Always a policeman plucked her by the sleeve.

Now it was five o'clock. It cleared again. She was on Franz-Josef's Quai by the Danube Canal and began to shiver. Cakes of ice were floating in the channel... It looked hazy, as if a fog enveloped it, very still and calm.

What should she do? Again... again... always the same thing: *what should she do?* Her footsteps went into Karl Ferdinand's Platz and before she knew it she was beneath the Ferdinandsbrücke, going down several steps until she reached the water's edge. There is a stone embankment here. It is underneath the bridge, hidden; few men, even the watchman, come to this spot. . . With the failure of daylight it was completely obscured.

Gisella, finding herself by the river's side, stepped into it. She touched it with the soles of her shoes, then her ankles, knees, thighs. . . Now it was icy cold, like a knife slicing her legs away, but she persevered... Presently she would be numb... nobody would see her, not a cricket would hear her... all was as still, as torpid as if death were at hand to absolve earth of all worldly care, taking her hand, leading her in. . . .

It is a brave thing to die this way. Normally, it is impossible. But in her delirious condition death was painless. She let herself in, hands grasped her—the wash of the water; shoulders pressed her—the wall of ice!... She looked up as the channel swam to her neck and perceived—or thought she did—a man above her on the Ferdinandsbrücke. . . He placed his hand to his head, it began to snow, he removed his hat, the flakes touched his hair..... He lifted his face and opened his eyes to Heaven, and something about the chin, something about the stark, white face reminded her of one she once knew. . . .

Franzl—the Count von Hohenegg!

She cried out... but simultaneously came the thought—

"This is a delusion of my mind because I am dying... God help me, I am dying... and he—where is he? Ah, this would never have happened if I had married him!....."

XXXVII

FRANZ MEIER

The man on the bridge was Franz von Hohenegg He it was as well, pale and gaunt, looking as if he had undergone much suffering, on whom the exhaust of yellow smoke had blown before his house on the Auerspergstrasse.

The unlooked for had happened... a miracle!... a chance of fate, and here he was, not whole, to be sure, but alive, silent, tall, almost ghastly, a spectre of a man, a war wreck, flotsam eddied and circulated in a whirlpool, but home again, meek and refined, like gold out of a forge, remade, rehabilitated,—a returned "dead man".....

When he was left on the field of the Rokitno Swamps in the midst of the retreat in Grodno Minsk, he lay in the position of a dead man for the balance of the night. An Austrian army surgeon had pronounced him dying. The dragoons left him. When a retreat is ordered, only the injured who can be revived are taken along... dead must be buried by the advancers, on whom the task falls with the occupation of an enemy *terrain*. . .

Nepomuck Navratil's binding had staunched the flow of blood from his deep thigh wound. If he had saved the peasant's life, the peasant had also saved his... he was tightly bound, the leg became numb, all feeling left his body and by day-dawn Russian cavalry, sweeping over the muddy wasteland, picked him up—a commander—and found breath in his lungs; he was taken to the base hospital by stretcher-bearers; the Russian advance went over. This was in August of 1917. Within the month he had been transferred to the Red

Cross Hospital in Moscow, along with other severely wounded men. . .

Franzl suffered agonies during this period. The bravado of a man under his first fire sadly contrasted with the sights he was forced to witness in this hospital. Poor, broken wrecks of men were on all sides, he was only one of many. But his leg came off, he was forced to undergo amputation, which was humanely done, and the Christmas month he spent on crutches, learning all over again, like a child, how to use his sound leg in conjunction with two wooden ones.... When they started in the following year to negotiate his exchange through Sweden, the entire spring went over... Later he was in Denmark. Too weak to go further, months found him in the Danish hospital... the end of the war came, mercifully, and, with it, down he went to Vienna to another military hospital, this time at home, and a medal of the order of the Iron Crown was fastened to his breast. . .

Still, the report of his death had been confirmed—through the surgeon of the Sixth Dragoons, who left him on the field. He was accorded good treatment, but his name went on the Liebenberg Monument as a man who had sacrificed his life in the war... And so he had to a certain extent. What remained? why should he live? for what purpose? to what end? . . . His estates in Galicia were in the hands of the enemy. His income was cut off. What should become of the Palais Hohenegg since he had no money with which to keep it up?... Even if he had, the property was forfeited, since an entire change of government had succeeded the autocracy of Karl Franz-Josef...aristocracy was done with, middle-classism ruled!....

Franzl discarded his Russian crutches for an artificial limb, which was bestowed on him in all kindliness by the authorities in Vienna. . . This was all he got besides a small pension and no other assistance...simply

the means to walk with which to earn his bread, clothe himself, find himself a bed—breathe, eat, sleep and water himself like a horse.

He started out to do this.

In February, when the winter elements were at their most extreme stage, he found himself on the streets... He was, like that other poor wanderer who came from Viterbo, quite friendless, alone and uncertain how to proceed.... He was aware that everything had changed; the palace of emperors, the military situation, his standing, the lives of his comrades... all was like a vast upheaval after the forces of nitrogen under the earth had set everything topsy-turvy, the crust of the ground bulging, forming new hills of the wealthy classes from valleys of the poor and vice versa... Little children begged from him in the streets. He had nothing to give them. Cripples sent him a brotherly look.

When at last he was in the Auerspergstrasse and stood before his old home, in the gutter, snow to his knees and the damp frost falling in his face, he perceived that the *palais* was in good condition. Nothing was stolen, carried away from the outside... His *portier* appeared at the door as the new owner stepped from the courtyard into the waiting automobile... He saw his smug smile, the cigar between his lips and was struck by the man's arrogant air, although he did not know him. . . As the groom for the Countess Gisella, Jock was a submerged personality...he had never swum to the surface in the consciousness of Franz von Hohenegg....

Now, when the air had cleared—the smoke blown away from his face and Franzl found himself again alone before the Atlas statues, when he saw his crest in the same position, the number of his house, its fine grill-work and lamps above the portico, he was filled with sad memories. He was desolate, his heart became chilled... Resolutely he stepped to the high,

locked doors and rang the bell. When the *portier* appeared he extended his hand—

"Kruger, kennst du mich nicht?"

"Um Gotteswillen..." exclaimed the old man... *"ist das der Herr Graf?! unmöglich! der ist ja todt...hab's doch an der Säule gesehen!...."*[1]

"No, Kruger," Franzl replied: "I am here," and he took his hand. "We are democrats now...shake! How are you? the missus?...come, aren't you going to ask me in even, Kruger? that's a fine way to treat your old master after all these years...."

Franzl deliberately made light of the meeting, for his own sake as well as the servant's. His heart had been too deeply seared by the perils of his life, his sorrows during war, at the front and in the close, acid-odour of hospitals, for him to take chances with his emotions....

"Let us go inside and we can talk it all over...I want to get some things as well, some of the things I left here. . ."

Kruger shook his head, not quite able to realize the meaning of the words spoken by a man he thought dead and carried out of earthly proximities...

"I'm—I'm afraid, your excellency, nothing has been left...everything is gone. The new owner ordered it all cleared."

"My trunks?"

"Only the one with the family relics is here...I hid that. . ."

Franzl was forced to laugh. Of what use were heirlooms to him now? Only the commercial value of gold and silver survived under the new republic.

"Well, let us see..."

He had not the least curiosity about the new owner.

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[1] "Kruger, don't you know me?"
"For God's sake, is that the count?! impossible, he's dead!....I saw it on the monument!"

They went inside... In the hallway the housekeeper was passing with a brush in her hand and she instantly stopped, her eyes opened with excitement and her mouth closed until it puckered!

"Christina... you see, she knows me, Kruger...your wife knows me," said Franzl, again controlling his feelings. "How are you, Christina? Come, you know me, surely...I haven't changed so much as that?!" He tried to hide his limp with a soldierly air. He walked very upright, and his hair, which had turned snow-white as he lay upon the Rokitno sump-holes, now exposed, as he had his hat in his hand, gave him an aged and very sombre appearance. . .

She looked from his hair to his eyes, recognized him and reached for his hand with an exclamation of wonderment, to kiss it after the manner of the old regime. . .

"No, no, no! Democracy now! Where is my trunk —my only possession? Come, August, show me to my room, or wherever it is you have that box...

"Well," he said later on, embarrassed, "you *have* made some changes here..." The wall-papers were giddy with colours, the books had been swept from the shelves, automobile racing charts succeeded; a golden horse-shoe was fastened over the entrance to the dining *salon*. . . "I can't find my way about."

"Come after me, sir..."

"Lead the way."

"I have a newspaper that shows your excellency's death notice..."

"But I came back. I don't know how it happened... I'm alive, I had a year and a half in the hospitals... time passed, we lost the war, so there you are... We must accept everything as it is, Kruger, and make the best of it. That is philosophy... You remember Nepomuck, Christina? Well, he was also shot, but he escaped with a bad arm—all shattered to pieces... I

don't know where he is. He was a brave fellow... Well, well, don't cry over me...here I am!" and he patted the soft-hearted housekeeper's arm... "Come, you never know when you die, so you must laugh—everything is changed. Make the best of it...."

But she continued to cry.

The *portier* had gotten his keys, now conducted him to a narrow alcove under the stairs, where he pulled out a trunk, the top yellow with dust, smeared his hand over it and opened it....

"Here is the remainder, *Herr Graf,* of everything... may you make the most of it. Some gold plate, the jewels of your mother, your father's sword."

"But is my violin here?"

"Yes, your excellency...I put it in also...."

Reverently he unpacked the chest. The violin was found. Franzl examined it. The strings were hanging, the bridge was broken. Otherwise it was in good condition and he replaced it, taking out the jewel casket of his mother and very gently, in order not to disturb it, lifting the lid....

There were the two collarets, the ear-rings and finger rings that his father presented his mother on their marriage day... There the tiara his mother always wore at court functions...two small brooches... He recalled that he had not taken much notice of these things in the old days.

What should he do with them now?

"Christina, would you like a souvenir to remember my mother?" he took her hands and apron from her eyes... "here, I'm talking to you—do you want a souvenir? then take this ring—let me slip it on your finger...."

She commenced to protest.

"Say nothing. I am going to give it to you. And you, August, what do you want?... a little stick-pin? This will remember my father to you... Me? I am

sure in your hearts you will always remember the Count Franzl, no?... there, there...." Before he knew what was what, patting the housekeeper on the shoulder, giving his hand again to Kruger, he was himself on the brink of tears—turning his head aside, trying to smother sentiment too powerful for them all. . .

"And so, we come to the end—this is all. I am going to another place, August, you must come and see me sometime. I don't know where it is; I haven't picked it out yet...but it will be somewhere very—er-er, democratic...you understand. I have got to earn my own living.

"And so, my friends, I will say good-bye for the present. Give my trunk to the expressman who calls—he will have the new number....

"Good-bye..."

"Good-bye," they said, both.

And when his manhood came back to him he was walking—with his limp—down Schmerling Platz toward the Ringstrasse... he was going out to hunt his living, thanking the good souls, thanking his own Deity that he was allowed to live; he passed through the Volksgarten, under the windows of the Hofburg and on into the thronging, white-blanketed business parts of old Vienna. . .

The first place he saw on entering the Stephansplatz was the candy shop of Victor Schmidt. It was wedged beside the clothing emporium of Jacob Rothberger, which has stood for a great while and is very famous, and he thought, because he had often traded there, perhaps his face would seem familiar, the honour would be great to employ him. He walked without hesitation inside the glass doors. . .

To follow Franzl, the Count von Hohenegg, from place to place as he sought employment would be both tiresome and fruitless. He was not the only man in Vienna who needed a livelihood... four or five hundred

had been in these stores to seek a living wage behind counters and in factories before him. . .

He was greeted with the same story in each place—

"We have more applicants than we can occupy. You are the eighth person who has come here this morning..." or the twelfth, or eighteenth, or twenty-fifth! To send an army of demobilised men, some sick, some well, whole or partial, into a city where they originally spent, but now needed to earn, was to flood a market, not too prosperous with customers, with supply exceeding demand... Too many people had to earn a living; too few could engage their services. . .

He was very near an exhausted condition when, finally, he had visited them all with one single exception. Before entering here, he heard the clock of St. Stephen's rhythmically chiming the hour of high noon... There he stood and automatically doffed his hat. . .

Stephansdom!

He had not eaten. He was tired. Was there such a thing as a spiritual consanguinity with God?

In order to rest, he went inside.

In order to pray, he sat on the bench. He could not kneel; he was handicapped by his artificial leg. He sat perfectly still in a pew of the great churchly edifice, laid his hands on the pew rail and sank his head upon them. . .

At one o'clock he was rested, felt as if he had been comforted, fed, reimbued with hope, and set out, breathing deeply, the cold, raw air rushing into his lungs from the Stephansplatz as he placed his feet on the snow-covered plaza. Not a flake had fallen since the earlier morning, but the sky was leaden and dull.

Beyond where he stood was the Graben[1]—beyond the Stock im Eisen Platz. For the first time he realized the real significance of this place of the "Iron Stick." . . . He was also an apprentice seeking work.

[1]chief commercial street of Vienna.

He was also about to hammer his nail beside the journeymen's who passed here seven centuries before! How many labourers, commercial and otherwise, were engaged in the Graben? There must be an opening for just one more!

He set out resolutely—but it was to the remaining shop on the Stephansplatz. If he failed here, the Graben was waiting for him.

The sign read: MANDELBAUM AND ROSENSTEIN.

This sign was a new one. Formerly it read: Mandelbaum and Rosenstein, Imperial and Royal Court Purveyors, and had the Austrian double eagle in gilt.

But beside this democratic touch no change had taken place in the management nor the quality of merchandise dispensed. It was still a neck-tie store... Franzl had bought his neck-ties here. He recalled the day he came out with a purchase under his arm and met a little woman on the Stephansplatz who told him her father was arrested—that her mother was dead. He took her to—well, to a place he was now ashamed to think about, but he pretended it was the residence of the commissary of police and stood on the Obere Augartenstrasse...there he—he——

Sadness entered his soul.

Where was Agnes? Had the waif of the Volksprater forgotten him? ground her organ, dreaming of another—perhaps despising him for what he had done to her? His conduct toward this child of the lower classes was despicable...he was quite convinced he had acted worse than a cad. But it wrung his heart—not because of this so much—*but because he loved her.* He had suffered. No matter how he had wronged her, she had made him suffer, loving her, being unable to forget the memory of her..and this touched him keenly. He was very sensitive now.

He went inside the door to divert himself from the pain his memories gave him; and here he applied for the seventh time that February day for labour to keep sustenance in his body...and he was rewarded.

"Come to work tomorrow," said Mr. Mandelbaum, taking the application of his former customer and aristocratic patron calmly... "you can sell neck-ties here, Mr. Hohenegg." . . .

"Thank you, sir," said Franzl, very humbly.

So he turned back into the street.

It was the work of another hour to find a tenement. By the time he had sent an expressman for his trunk and rested himself, it was evening. He lived close to the Ferdinandsbrücke. . . His landlady had given him a little sandwich of bread and sausage and a cup of hot coffee to stimulate him, taking his watch as security until he should earn enough to pay for his room and board. . .

Now he stepped into the street. He had seen the snow falling in dry, hard little particles from three o'clock until five.

When it stopped, he crunched into the new carpet. Dusk was at hand—a dreary hour of the day when human emotion reaches the lowest ebb. Lights are not beaming above the streets yet nor in windows from houses... The lamp-lighters are just passing about, lifting their tapers, gazing at the sky and the lamps, undecided whether to blot out the sky with the lamplight or allow the dying sun to fall in full glory. . .

This day there was no sun. He crossed the Franz-Josef Quai with its warehouses and docks, gazed at the Danube Channel, which was pewter-gray, somnolent, swimming beside its concrete banks at the point where the bridge spanned, leading into the Praterstrasse. . .

Perhaps there was a sentiment in his heart for this bridge, because it led him over the channel into the

avenue which sped for miles in the direction of the pleasure park. It was a subconscious sensation. . . He could feel himself crossing it; but when he reached the middle, something said: halt!

He stood still.

Night was just falling. One by one, lights winked into the river. He could smell acacia in his nostrils from the Prater park, see the lilacs, hear the *Rutsch-bahn*.....

Then he felt the tiniest fleck of snow upon his hand, so he took off his hat and turned his face upward to the new-descending snow-fall. . .

At this moment he was conscious of a splash in the water below him... a human voice called out!

He looked quickly over the railing...thought he saw a head—a woman's face, agonized, white, looking up at him.... It clutched him at the throat—he seemed to see—he saw——

No! He examined the spot with all his might, leaning over the bridge rail, hanging out until he nearly lost his balance. . .

All was as dark below as a cavern—except for a white slab of ice floating directly over the spot.....

XXXVIII

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

June is the month of brides. . .

However, in May, when the chestnut blossoms were again blooming and spring gave a first balmy warmth to the air, Agnes realized that at last the Wurstelprater could be reopened... If Bartholomew, Mrs. Rossreiter, Nepomuck and Marianka Huber agreed with her, they could move into the concessions... maybe all could be operated under one head.

In fact, she very gently suggested that if—as Bartholomew had said in November—he intended to buy an interest with Mrs. Rossreiter and thus become a partner, and Nepomuck and Mrs. Huber intended to marry—as they had agreed, also in November!—why the arrangement could be very perfect, only—and she hesitated and hung her head, and Bartholomew, in a very transport of joy, conceived at once that she wished him to advance the date of their wedding, which had been decided for June. . . Therefore, he sprang about very agilely, said he thought it could all be terminated that way. . . They went to a sign-maker, had the lettering twisted, first one way, then the other, the names read, finally completed:

NAVRATIL...ROSSREITER AND GRUBER... *VERGNUGUNGS ESTABLISHMENT*... which meant "Pleasure Establishment," or the fact that the merry-go-round and the *Kraftmaschine,* the Punch and Judy and the Wonder Palace were all one combination, operating with three partners, sharing equally....

Now, when this was arranged, a wedding was bound to follow.

Nepomuck Navratil had really no interest as things stood. The sign should have read: Huber, Rossreiter and Gruber, since the hunchback had paid his way into partnership with the two ladies. . . Why, therefore, was it written with the name Navratil?

The 7th day of May saw all this uncertainty cleared up.

A closed one-horse cab ambled over the Praterstrasse, past *Venedig in Wien,* just rousing from its five years of sleep, and into the Huber concession. The driver had a decoration of white flowers on his whip and in his hat-band, which is the custom, and his horse was likewise a celebrant of the great occasion, by having the same blossoms fastened among the blinkers over his eyes. . .

When the cab arrived, the very first person to descend was a little man not over five feet high, with a flower in his button-hole—Mr. Bartholomew Gruber! And after him a tiny lady in a new dress, with a large bouquet in her baby hands and a wistful smile on her lips, like her mother—Agnes Urban. Nepomuck followed in a dark suit with orange blossoms in his lapel, the mark of bridegrooms,—and was accompanied by his blushing bride, no longer Marianka Huber, but a widow remarried, her white tulle veil wreathing her head above her street dress, which was really a very odd combination. . .

But everybody was happy: Mrs. Rossreiter, too plump to dismount from the one-horse cab without help....Nepomuck and Marianke because they were united...Agnes because she was coming to the Wurstelprater with Francisca for the first time...and Bartholomew, not because his wedding day had advanced one hour from the June 11th promised by Agnes—contrary to his expectations,—but simply because they were

all so happy, the day was bright, the chestnuts in blossom, he was himself close to matrimony—the fulfilling of his heart's desire, and there was nothing to be melancholy about.

The boarding about the booths had all been taken down. Dilapidation was being effaced. Weeds, that grew in profusion from the desolation of the war period, had been pulled, and the trees pruned, the sidewalks levelled, the houses painted, the booths rebuilt.... in fact, it was like a new city, sprung up on the ruins of the old—a fresh pleasure park, opening to the public, with fresh amusements, new blood, paint, varnish and oiled machinery!

The very last of the renovation was drawing to a close. The horses of the merry-go-round wore new coats of colour. After this was done, they tried the machinery, Francisca on a box learned to turn the grind-organ with her mamma's hand guiding her own. . .

Like children they inspected everything, gravely, saluting each other, laughing, chattering, singing snatches of songs and going about from one booth to the next among the other concessionaires and all eating sausages together and drinking lemonade.

Bartholomew mounted the platform—

"Ladees and gents, step right in...the greatest performance starts right now...don't push——"

"Who's pushin'?" screamed the fat woman, her voice returning,—"look out! get off that horse. . . *um Gotteswillen,*" she threw her hands in the air—"did you ever see anything like it?!" Nepomuck had seated himself on Huber's famous *"Schimmel"*[1] of the *Ringelspiel,* freshly enamelled, and he now rose with the seat of his pants all white.... "Nobuddy's got any sense... now, go over an' see if the Punch an' Judy works, Mister Navratil...an' don't let me catch

[1]white horse.

you doin' no more damage 'round here, y' hear me?!...."

As cheerful as everyone was, at bottom they had a sentiment about this reunion. They could have cried. Five years had passed. Who was missing? Sometimes a good man and sometimes a bad—but they mingled for the sake of checking up old faces: Astarte, the Wonder of the World, her barker...the deep-sea diver who never dove...the fire department that had its engine and hose-cart in the middle of the street, giving the horses a washing off and the copper a polish...the dwarfs...the lady without lower body, running to catch her seventh child who had thrown a sausage skin down her back.....

Who was missing?

Among these they mourned Boniface, his liberty cap, his saucy ways.

Toward evening the first of the day's population came into the Wurstelprater... music began to be played on every hand, and a rumble like retreating thunder sounded close to their ears. It was the first flight of the *Rutschbahn,* a little stiff, scraping, not as smooth as months of coasting would make the tracks again,—but part and parcel of the pleasure park and, therefore, a joyous sound, sweet as music, reckless, exhilarating...

When the merry-go-round rotated for the first time, a man stood on the edge of the throng surrounding it, his eyes alight, a singular emotion gravening deeply the lines about his sensitive mouth and chin.

Had he wanted to ride he would have only found it necessary to buy a ticket from a roll in the boxlike booth in which sat Marianka Navratil... He could have stepped to the opening, held out his hand extending a coin, the oblong bit of pasteboard would have fallen into it, he could have mounted a horse, white or black—they were all dry now—and taken his seat like

any child or workman who had never sat astride a live horse in the *corso*. . .

But he did none of these things. The man was merely a spectator.

When he became tired he gently mingled with the crowds, allowed himself to slip in between them, to pass through under the sign which was fastened above the alley, reading NAVRATIL...ROSSREITER AND GRUBER... and from this position to disappear as if he had been wiped off the earth!

Nobody saw him... no one followed him.

The night closed down. The lights rose like little stars from lamp-posts on every side, and the booths presented a picture of illumination with every electric light bulb as new and fresh as the year and the hour!

When the clock turned to nine Agnes had Francisca packed between her clean white sheets upstairs in the new room she was to occupy. It had every stray atom of desolation wiped out of it... her furniture was plain and clean and sweet. There was an odour of the scrubbing brush and a basin of soap water... a carpet was on the floor, dimity curtains on the windows, fresh green shades, transparent glass, papered walls, a brand new stove, quilts, a mirror, dresser, table and chairs. . .

What more was there to wish for?

Yet, on her way downstairs something clutched her heart—a recollection—night...lilacs...sweet acacia... she felt herself wafted off into a dream and went hastily to the booth where Marianka was sitting, to escape her thoughts. She felt like a thief running from his conscience.....

Business was good; Marianka sat right there, newly wed, her hair still smelling with orange blossoms and her hands fingering the ticket roll.

What right had she, Agnes, to think of personal affairs—events of years past, when Marianka did not even think of her marriage?

Night... acacia... lilacs....

Mingled, these three words had a singular effect upon her... she tried to shake it off.

"Perhaps if I go into the park and I *see* the flowers and the chestnut boughs, maybe then I can——" Agnes looked around, perceived she was unseen, ran through into the little alley and out into the park as if she were quite alone... nobody was behind her, nobody to pluck her by the sleeve, whisper into her ear, take her to a bench, sit down beside her, love her, cajole her...make her ever so happy beneath the snow-white moon and the shimmering stars.....

Nobody?

....Bartholomew had seen her go. However invisible light feet attached to a lithe body of a young and headstrong woman think they are, others can follow them... Two pairs of feet can run as well as one!

But Bartholomew was not to catch up with her. He progressed only as far as the second lilac bush—and then he saw a sight that turned every muscle of his heart as cold as iron, as naked, hard and brittle, at one time, as forged steel!.... He remained there, hidden, trembling from his head to his feet.

Agnes had advanced quite innocently, run and then walked into the shadows playing across the moss-grown and weed-choked paths that her ankles had brushed over so frequently in years gone by... She stepped into the circle of a giant tree spreading its branches overhead... and there she hesitated because she heard a sound. The sound came out very gently, it wailed like a violin's heart touched on the finest chords and gave out a dancing rhythm that she knew—so very well: the Strauss waltz, "Out There In The Blossoming Garden..."

The tree branches swayed...was she rocking them in her emotion?

A gentle breeze swept over the Prater park. . .

The melodious violin ceased its wailing. . . She was attracted to go further because a silent voice called her that way. One of the giant chestnuts had been frosted and died. The renovators in the Prater had cut it down.

Seated on this stump was an old man. His hat lay on the ground. His back was toward her and the light from the moon at half-fullness cast direct rays upon his silver-white hair, thick and beautiful, but the hair of a man grown old with life's duties, responsibilities, sorrows and heartaches. . .

She did not understand why this head should have a fascination for her—why it should draw her, lure her toward the musician and set her directly before his face in the pale moonlight. . .

Now the face was lifted and exposed to her—a young face!... She could have swooned...—it was Franz Meier!

Bartholomew saw these lovers reunite. They clasped hands, lips, shoulders, breasts... they were one under the evening light!

He heard the woman murmur, withdrawing herself from the man's enclosure—from his love:

"No...it is impossible..." in her sobbing voice.

The quivering masculine tones responded—

"I know—it is because I am a cripple....."

"No, no, no,!" quickly, then further sobs—"I have promised someone else...."

"Who is it?"

"Bartholomew...."

His heart gave a lurch and seemed to crack; the pieces rasped against each other, giving infinite pain. . .

"You—love—him?"

Silence.

He strained his ears... he knew what the answer must be. Only one man can be loved by a woman who loved as this woman loved this man! Still, he wanted

to hear; it is a childish perversion but a human one to want to be convinced against the sounder sense and judgment.....

He heard—"He is so kind and good to me...."

"But—do you love him?"

The woman's voice wailed like the violin—

"I have only loved once...."

"Then tell him so..."

"It would break his heart!"

"....And so you want to break mine?"

"Mine also, perhaps," she said,—"but I must keep my faith. . . . Good-bye, Franz... beloved... good-bye....."

Another long and fervent sob, trembling as it was torn out of her soul, and Agnes started toward the gate. She passed the first lilac bush and the second—was almost out of the park when a terrible sound broke the silence, shattering the air, tearing at her ear-drums, sending everything into wild concussion about her! And she trembled and then knew what it was—a revolver shot!

Somebody was shot! Franz?...my God!

She ran now, with palpitating feet to the stump where he was seated.

He was gone!

She looked right—left. There was his hat, his violin. There the mark of his shoes—one extending from the steel brace at his foot where she had seen it—steel—reflecting the pale beams of the moon or the Prater light.....

She was wild now with anxiety... Had Franzl shot himself? was she contributing just this last fatal stroke to his poor, wretched, insufferable life?!

She suddenly perceived a small billow of smoke rising out of the lilac bush and threw herself toward it...parting the branches... yes, there he lay!

But Franzl immediately rose from the bottom of

the broken branches, laden with blossoms, unhurt, but with a face reflecting sorrow to her startled gaze. His mouth was drooping, heart-broken agony in that wordless glance....

She understood.

Bartholomew was underneath. He had shot himself to make way for their union, with his little silver-mounted pistol—the pistol bought with the lottery money for his protection.

Protection!

The crickets sang in the grass where daisies speckled their tiny heads reaching up for a glimpse of the chestnut trees... The night remained still, doubly so for the crash that shattered its silence...and sweet odours rose... the tang of powder-smoke... twinkling lights, the staring moon... the sudden grumble of the *Rutschbahn*. . . .

Outside were the crowds and the merry-go-round that was without its barker and went 'round and 'round and 'round. . .

* * * * * * * *

Upon such sacrifice... the gods themselves throw incense.....

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